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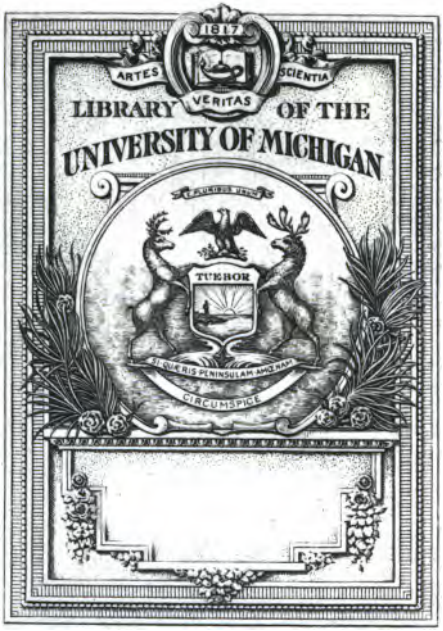

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EARLY SPRING IN MASSACHUSETTS

FROM THE JOURNAL OF

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

EDITED BY

H. G. O. BLAKE

The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere. — *Walden*, p. 92.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

HENRY DAVID THOREAU was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817, and died there May 6, 1862. Most of his life was spent in that town, and most of the localities referred to in this volume are to be found there. His Journal, from which the following selections were made, was bequeathed to me by his sister Sophia, who died October 7, 1876, at Bangor, Maine. Before it came into my possession I had been in the habit of borrowing volumes of it from time to time, and thus continuing an intercourse with its author which I had enjoyed, through occasional visits and correspondence, for many years before his death, and which I regard as perhaps the highest privilege of my life.

In reading the Journal for my own satisfaction, I had sometimes been wont to attend each day to what had been written on the same day of the month in some other year; desiring thus to be led to notice, in my walks, the phenomena which Thoreau noticed, so to be brought nearer

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to the writer by observing the same sights, sounds, etc., and if possible have my love of nature quickened by him. This habit suggested the arrangement of dates in the following pages, viz., the bringing together of passages under the same day of the month in different years. In this way I hoped to make an interesting picture of the progress of the seasons, of Thoreau's year. It was evidently painted with a most genuine love, and often apparently in the open air, in the very presence of the phenomena described, so that the written page brings the mind of the reader, as writing seldom does, into closest contact with nature, making him see its sights, hear its sounds, and feel its very breath upon his cheek.

Thoreau seems deliberately to have chosen nature rather than man for his companion, though he knew well the higher value of man, as appears from such passages as the following: "The blue sky is a distant reflection of the azure serenity that looks out from under a human brow." "To attain to a true relation to one human creature is enough to make a year memorable." And somewhere he says in substance, "What is the singing of birds or any natural sound compared with the voice of one we love?" Friendship was one of his favorite themes, and no one has written with a finer appreciation of

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it. Still, in ordinary society, he found it so difficult to reach essential humanity through the civilized and conventional that he turned to nature, who was ever ready to meet his highest mood. From the haunts of business and the common intercourse of men he went into the woods and fields as from a solitary desert into society. He might have said with another, — he did virtually say, — "If we go solitary to streams and mountains, it is to meet man there where he is more than ever man."

But while I have sought in these selections to represent the progressive life of nature, I have also been careful to give Thoreau's thoughts, because, though his personality is in a striking degree single, he being ever the same man in his conversation, letters, books, and the details of his life, though his observation is imbedded in his philosophy ("how to observe is how to behave," etc.), yet if any distinction may be made, his thoughts or philosophy seem to me incomparably the more interesting and important.

He declined from the first to live for the common prizes of society, for wealth or even what is called a competence, for professional, social, political, or even literary success; and this not from a want of ambition or a purpose, but from an ambition far higher than the ordinary, which fully possessed him, — an ambition to obey his

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purest instincts, to follow implicitly the finest intimations of his genius, to secure thus the fullest and freest life of which he was capable. He chose to lay emphasis on his relations to nature and the universe rather than on those he bore to the ant-hill of society, not to be merely another wheel in the social machine. He felt that the present is only one among the possible forms of civilization, and so preferred not to commit himself to it. Herein lies the secret of that love of the wild which was so prominent a trait in his character.

It is evident that the main object of society now is to provide for our material wants, and still more and more luxuriously for them, while the higher wants of our nature are made secondary, put off for some Sunday service and future leisure. A great lesson of Thoreau's life is that all this must be reversed, that whatever relates to the supply of inferior wants must be simplified, in order that the higher life may be enriched, though he desired no servile imitation of his own methods, for perhaps the highest lesson of all to be learnt from him is that the only way of salvation lies in the strictest fidelity to one's own genius.

A late English reviewer, who shows in many respects a very just appreciation of Thoreau, charges him with *doing* little beyond writing a

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few books, as if that might not be a great thing; but a life so steadily directed from the first toward the highest ends, gaining as the fruits of its fidelity such a harvest of sanity, strength, and tranquillity, and that wealth of thought which has been well called "the only conceivable prosperity," accompanied, too, as it naturally was, with the earnest and effective desire to communicate itself to others, — such a life is the worthiest deed a man can perform, the purest benefit he can confer upon his fellows, compared with which all special acts of service or philanthropy are trivial.

H. G. O. BLAKE.

February, 1881.

It will be seen that in this new edition of the present volume have been inserted those passages from the Journal, taken from the first four days of April, which had appeared in "The Atlantic Monthly" for April, 1878, and which had been omitted here by mistake.

H. G. O. B.

October, 1893.

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NOTE ON THE PORTRAIT

THE portrait which prefaces this volume is from a daguerreotype taken by Moxham, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Mr. W. E. Channing has given a description of Thoreau when in his vigor, which may be read as an accompaniment to this portrait.

"In height, he was about the average; in his build, spare, with limbs that were rather longer than usual, or of which he made a longer use. His face, once seen, could not be forgotten. The features were quite marked: the nose aquiline or very Roman, like one of the portraits of Cæsar (more like a beak, as was said); large, overhanging brows above the deepest-set blue eyes that could be seen, in certain lights, and in others gray, — eyes expressive of all kinds of feeling, but never weak or near-sighted; the forehead not unusually broad or high, full of concentrated energy and purpose; the mouth with prominent lips, pursed up with meaning and thought when silent, and giving out when open a stream of the most varied and unusual and instructive sayings. His hair was a dark brown, exceedingly abundant, fine, and soft; and for several years he wore a comely beard. His whole figure had an active earnestness, as if he had no moment to waste. The clenched hand betokened purpose. In walking, he made a short cut if he could, and when sitting in the shade or by the wall-side seemed merely the clearer to look forward into the next piece of activity. Even in the boat he had a wary, transitory air, his eyes on the outlook — perhaps there might be ducks, or the Blondin turtle, or an otter, or sparrow."

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EARLY SPRING IN MASSACHUSETTS

February 24, 1852. P. M. Railroad causeway. I am reminded of spring by the quality of the air. The cock-crowing and even the telegraph harp prophesy it, though the ground is for the most part covered with snow. It is a natural resurrection, an experience of immortality. . . . The telegraph harp reminds me of Anacreon. That is the glory of Greece, that we are reminded of her only when in our best estate, — our elysian days, — when our senses are young and healthy again. I could find a name for every strain or intonation of the harp from one or other of the Grecian bards. I often hear Mimnermus; often, Menander.

I am too late by a day or two for the sand foliage on the east side of the Deep Cut. It is glorious to see the soil again here where a shovel perchance will enter it and find no frost. The frost is partly come out of this bank, and it has become dry again in the sun. The very sound of men's work reminds, advertises, me of the coming of spring, as I now hear the

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laborer's sledge on the rails. . . . As we grow older, is it not ominous that we have more to write about evening, less about morning? We must associate more with the early hours.

February 24, 1854. P. M. To Walden and Fair Haven. Nuthatches are faintly answering each other, tit for tat, on different keys — a faint croak. Now and then one utters a loud, distinct *quah*. This bird, more than any other I know, loves to stand with its head downward; meanwhile, chickadees, with their silver tinkling, are flitting high above through the tops of the pines. . . . Observed in one of the little pond holes between Walden and Fair Haven where a partridge had traveled around in the snow, amid the bordering bushes, twenty-five rods; had pecked the green leaves of the lambkill, and left fragments on the snow, and had paused at each high blueberry bush, and shaken down fragments of its bark on the snow. The buds appeared to be its main object. I finally scared the bird.

February 24, 1855. The brightening of the willow or of osiers, that is a season in the spring, showing that the dormant sap is awakened. I now remember a few osiers which I have seen early in past springs, thus brilliantly green and red, and it is as if all the landscape shone. Though the twigs were few that I saw,

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I remember it as a prominent phenomenon affecting the face of Nature, a gladdening of her face. You will often fancy that they look brighter before the spring has come, and when there has been no change in them. Thermometer at 10° at 10 P. M.

February 24, 1857. A fine spring morning. The ground is almost completely bare again. There has been a frost in the night. Now at half past eight it is melted and wets my feet like a dew. The water on the meadow this still bright morning is smooth as in April. I am surprised to hear the strain of a song-sparrow from the river side, and as I cross from the causeway to the hill, thinking of the bluebird, I that instant hear one's note from deep in the softened air. It is already 40°. By noon it is between 50° and 60°. As the day advances I hear more bluebirds, and see their azure flakes settling on the fence posts. Their short rich warble curls through the air. Its grain now lies parallel to the bluebird's warble, like boards of the same lot. It seems to be one of those early springs of which we have heard, but which we have never experienced.

I have seen the probings of skunks for a week or more. I now see where one has pawed out the worm dust or chankings from a hole in the base of a walnut, and torn open the fungi, etc.,

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exploring for grubs or insects. They are very busy these nights.

If I should make the least concession my friend would spurn me. I am obeying his law as well as my own.

Where is the actual friend you love? Ask from what hill the rainbow's arch springs! It adorns and crowns the earth. Our friends are our kindred, of our species. There are but few of our species on the globe. Between me and my friend what unfathomable distance! All mankind, like water and insects, are between us. If my friend says in his mind, I will *never* see you again, I translate it, of necessity, into *ever*. That is its definition in Love's lexicon. Those we can love we can hate. To others we are indifferent.

P. M. To Walden. The railroad in the Deep Cut is dry as in spring, almost dusty. The best of the sand foliage is already gone. I walk without a great coat. A chickadee, with its winter lisp, flits over. I think it is time to hear its phebe note, and that instant it pipes it forth. Walden is still covered with thick ice, though melted a foot from the shore. The French (in the Jesuit Relation) say "fil de l'eau" for that part of the current of a river in which any floating thing would be carried, generally about equidistant from the two banks.

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It is a convenient expression for which I think we have no equivalent.

February 24, 1858. I see rhodora in bloom in a pitcher with water andromeda. Went through that long swamp northeast of Boaz's Meadow. Interesting and peculiar are the clumps and masses of panicled andromeda, with light brown stems, topped uniformly with very distinct, yellow-brown recent shoots, ten or twelve inches long, with minute red buds sleeping close along them. This uniformity in such masses gives a pleasing tinge to the swamp's surface. Wholesome colors which wear well. I see quite a number of emperor moths' cocoons attached to this shrub, some hung round with a loose mass of leaves as big as my two fists. What art in the red-eye to make these two adjacent maple twigs serve for the rim of its pensile basket, inweaving them! Surely it finds a place for itself in nature, between the two twigs of a maple.

On the side of the meadow moraine, just north of the boulder field, I see barberry bushes three inches in diameter and ten feet high. What a surprising color this wood has. It splits and splinters very much when I bend it. I cut a cane, and, shaving off the outer bark, find it of imperial yellow, as if painted, — fit for a Chinese mandarin.

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February 25, 1859. Measure your health by your sympathy with morning and spring. If there is no response in you to the awakening of nature, if the prospect of an early morning walk does not banish sleep, if the warble of the first bluebird does not thrill you, know that the morning and spring of your life are past. Thus may you feel your pulse.

I heard this morning a nuthatch in the elms on the street. I think they are heard oftener at the approach of spring, just as the phebe note of the chickadee is, and so their *quah quah* is a herald of the spring.

A good book is not made in the cheap and off-hand manner of many of our scientific reports, ushered in by the message of the President communicating it to Congress, and the order of Congress that many thousand copies be printed with the letters of instruction from the Secretary of the Interior (or rather exterior); the bulk of the book being a journal of a picnic or sporting expedition by a brevet lieutenant-colonel, illustrated by photographs of the traveler's footsteps across the plains, and an admirable engraving of his native village as it appeared on his leaving it, and followed by an appendix on the paleontology of the route by a distinguished savant who was not there; the last illustrated by very finely executed engrav-

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ings of some old broken shells picked up on the road.

There are several men of whose comings and goings the town knows little, — I mean the trappers. They may be seen coming from the woods and river, perhaps with nothing in their hands, and you do not suspect what they have been about. They go about their business in a stealthy manner for fear that any should see where they set their traps, for the fur-trade still flourishes here. Every year they visit the out-of-the-way swamps and meadows and brooks to set and examine their traps for musquash and mink, and the owners of the land commonly know nothing of it. But few as the trappers are here, it seems by Goodwin's accounts that they steal one another's traps.

All the criticism I got on my lecture on "Autumnal Tints," at Worcester, on the 22d, was that I presumed my audience had not seen so much of them as they had. But after reading it I am more than ever convinced that they have not seen much of them, that there are very few persons who do see much of nature.

February 25, 1860. The fields of open water amid the thin ice of the meadows are the spectacle to-day. They are especially dark blue when I look southwest. Has it anything to do with the direction of the wind? It is pleasant

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to see high, dark blue waves half a mile off, running incessantly along the edge of white ice. There the motion of the blue liquid is the most distinct. As the waves rise and fall they seem to run swiftly along the edge of the ice.

For a day or two past I have seen in various places the small tracks of skunks. They appear to come out commonly in the warmer weather in the latter part of February.

I noticed yesterday the first conspicuous silvery sheen from the needles of the white pine waving in the wind. A small one was conspicuous by the side of the road, more than a quarter of a mile ahead. I suspect that those plumes which have been oppressed or contracted by snow and ice are not only dried, but opened and spread by the wind.

Those peculiar tracks which I saw some time ago, and still see, made in slosh, and since frozen at the andromeda ponds, I think must be mole tracks, and those "nicks" on the sides are where they shoved back the snow with their vertical flippers. This is a very peculiar track, a broad channel in slosh and at length in ice.

February 26, 1840. The most important events make no stir on their first taking place, nor indeed in their effects directly. They seem hedged about by secrecy. It is concussion or the rushing together of air to fill a vacuum

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which makes a noise. The great events to which all things consent, and for which they have prepared the way, produce no explosion, for they are gradual, and create no vacuum which requires to be filled. As a birth takes place in silence, and is whispered about the neighborhood, but an assassination, which is at war with the constitution of things, creates a tumult immediately.

February 26, 1841. My prickles or smoothness are as much a quality of your hand as of myself. I cannot tell you what I am more than a ray of the summer's sun. What I am, I am, and say not. Being is the great explainer. In the attempt to explain, shall I plane away all the spines till it is no thistle, but a cornstalk?

If my world is not sufficient without thee, my friend, I will wait till it is, and then call thee. You shall come to a palace, not to an almshouse.

To be great we do as if we would be tall merely, longer than we are broad, stretch ourselves and stand on tiptoe. But greatness is well-proportioned, unstrained, and stands on the soles of the feet.

In composition I miss the hue of the mind, as if we could be satisfied with the dews of the morning and evening without their colors, or

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the heavens without their azure. This good book helps the sun shine in my chamber. The rays fall on its page as if to explain and illustrate it. I, who have been sick, hear cattle low in the street with such a healthy ear as prophesies my cure. These sounds lay a finger on my pulse to some purpose. A fragrance comes in at all my senses which proclaims that I am still of nature, the child. The threshing in yonder barn and the tinkling of the anvil come from the same side of Styx with me. If I were a physician I would try my patients thus: I would wheel them to a window and let nature feel their pulses. It will soon appear if their sensuous existence is sound. These sounds are but the throbbing of some pulse in me. Nature seems to have given me these hours to pry into her private drawers. I watch the insensible perspiration rising from my coat or hand on the wall. I go and feel my pulse in all the recesses of the house, and see if I am of force to carry a homely life and comfort into them.

February 26, 1852. We are told to-day that civilization is making rapid progress; the tendency is ever upward, substantial justice is done even by human courts. You may trust the good intentions of mankind. We read to-morrow in the newspapers that France is on the

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eve of going to war with England to give employment to her army. This Russian war is popular. What is the influence of men of principle? or how numerous are they? How many moral teachers has society? Of course so many as she has will resist her. How many resist her? How many have I heard speak with warning voice? The preacher's standard of morality is no higher than that of his audience. He studies to conciliate his hearers, and never to offend them. Does the threatened war between France and England evince any more enlightenment than a war between two savage tribes, the Iroquois and Hurons? Is it founded in better reason?

February 26, 1855. Directly off Clam-shell Hill, within four rods of it, where the water is three or four feet deep, I see where the musquash dived and brought up clams before the last freezing. Their open shells are strewn along close to the edge of the ice, and close together for about three rods in one place, and the bottom under the edge of the older ice, as seen through the new black ice, is perfectly white with those which sank. They may have been blown in, or the ice may have melted. The nacre of these freshly opened shells is very fair, azure, or else a delicate salmon pink (?), or rosaceous, or violet. I find one not opened,

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but frozen, and several have one valve quite broken in two in the rat's effort to wrench them open, leaving the frozen fish half exposed. All the rest show the marks of their teeth at one end or the other. You can see distinctly also the marks of their teeth where with a scraping cut they have scraped off the tough muscle which fastens the fish to its shell, also sometimes all along the nacre next the edge. . . . These shells lie thickly around the edge of each small circle of thinner black ice in the midst of the white, showing where was open water a day or two ago. At the beginning and end of winter, when the river is partly open, the ice thus serves the muskrat instead of other stool. . . . Hence it appears that this is still a good place for clams as it was in Indian days.

February 26, 1857. What an accursed land, methinks unfit for the habitation of man, where the wild animals are monkeys!

February 27, 1841. Life looks as fair at this moment as a summer's sea . . . like a Persian city or hanging gardens in the distance, so washed in light, so untried, only to be thridded by clean thoughts. All its flags are flowing and tassels streaming, and drapery flapping like some pavilion. The heavens hang over it like some low screen, and seem to undulate in the breeze. Through this pure, unwiped hour, as

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through a crystal glass, I look out upon the future as a smooth lawn for my virtue to disport in. It shows from afar as unrepulsive as the sunshine upon walls and cities, over which the passing life moves as gently as a shadow. I see the course of my life, like some retired road, wind on without obstruction into a country maze. I am attired for the future so, as the sun setting presumes all men at leisure and in contemplative mood, and am thankful that it is thus presented blank and indistinct. It still o'ertops my life. My future deeds bestir themselves within me and move grandly towards a consummation, as ships go down the Thames. A steady onward motion I feel in me as still as that, or like some vast snowy cloud whose shadow first is seen across the fields. It is the material of all things, loose and set afloat, that makes my sea.

These various words are not without various meanings. The combined voice of the race makes nicer distinctions than any individual. There are the words diversion and amusement. It takes more to amuse than to divert. We must be surrendered to our amusements, but only turned aside to our diversions. We have no will in the former, but oversee the latter. We are oftenest diverted in the street, but amused in our chambers. We are diverted

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from our engagements, but amused when we are listless. We may be diverted from an amusement, and amused by a diversion. It often happens that a diversion becomes our amusement, and an amusement our employment.

February 27, 1851. Of two men, one of whom knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, and the other really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all, what great advantage has the latter over the former? which is the better to deal with? I do not know that knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all we had called knowledge before, an indefinite sense of the grandeur and glory of the universe. It is a lighting up of the mist by the sun. But man cannot be said to know, in the highest sense, any better than he can look serenely and with impunity in the face of the sun.

How when a man purchases a thing, he is determined to get and get hold of it, using how many expletives and how long a string of synonymous or similar terms signifying possession in the legal process. What 's mine 's my own. An old deed of a small piece of swamp land, which I have lately surveyed at the risk of being mired past recovery, says that "the said

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Spaulding, his heirs and assigns, shall and may from this (?) time, and at all times forever hereafter, by force and virtue of these presents, lawfully, peaceably, and quietly have, hold, use, occupy, possess, and enjoy the said swamp," etc.

The following bears on the floating ice which has risen from the bottom of the meadows. Robert Hunt says, "'Water conducts heat downward but very slowly; a mass of ice will remain undissolved but a few inches under water on the surface of which ether or any other inflammable body is burning. If ice swam beneath the surface the summer sun would scarcely have power to thaw it, and thus our lakes and seas would be gradually converted into solid masses."

Nature and man; some prefer one, others the other. But that is all "de gustibus." It makes no odds at what well you drink, provided it be a well-head.

Walking in the woods, it may be some afternoon, the shadow of the wings of a thought flits across the landscape of my mind, and I am reminded how little eventful are our lives. What have been all these wars and rumors of wars, and modern discoveries and improvements, so called? A mere irritation in the skin. But this shadow which is so soon past,

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and whose substance is not detected, suggests that there are events of importance whose interval is to us a true historic period.

The lecturer is wont to describe the nineteenth century, the American of the last generation, in an off-hand and triumphant strain, wafting him to Paradise, spreading his fame by steam and telegraph, recounting the number of wooden stopples he has whittled. But he does not perceive that this is not a sincere or pertinent account of any man's or nation's life. It is the hip-hip-hurrah and mutual admiration society style. Cars go by and we know their substance as well as their shadow! They stop and we get into them. But those sublime thoughts, passing on high, do not stop, and we never get into them. Their conductor is not like one of us.

I feel that the man who, in his conversation with me about the life of man in New England, lays much stress on railroads, telegraphs, and such enterprises does not go below the surface of things. . . . In one of the mind's avatars, in the interval between sleeping and waking, ay, in one of the interstices of a Hindoo dynasty, perchance, such things as the nineteenth century, with all its improvements, may come and go again. Nothing makes a deep and lasting impression but what is weighty. . . . He

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who lives according to the highest law is in one sense lawless. That is an unfortunate discovery, certainly, that of a law which binds us where we did not know that we were bound. Live free, child of the mist. He for whom the law is made, who does not obey the law, but whom the law obeys, reclines on pillows of down, and is wafted at will whither he pleases; for man is superior to all laws, both of heaven and earth, when he takes his liberty.

February 27, 1852. The main river is not yet open except in very few places, but the north branch, which is so much more rapid, is open near Tarbell's and Harrington's, where I walked to-day, and flowing with full tide, bordered with ice on either side, sparkles in the clear, cool air, — a silvery sparkle as from a stream that would not soil the sky. . . . We have almost completely forgotten the summer. This restless and now swollen stream has burst its icy fetters, and as I stand looking up it westward for half a mile, where it winds slightly under a high bank, its surface is lit up here and there with a fine-grained silvery sparkle which makes the river appear something celestial, more than a terrestrial river, which might have suggested that one surrounding the shield in Homer. If rivers come out of their prison thus bright and immortal, shall not I, too, re-

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sume my spring life with joy and hope? Have I no hopes to sparkle on the surface of life's current? It is worth while to have our faith revived by seeing where a river swells and eddies about a half-buried rock.

February 27, 1853. A week or two ago I brought home a handsome pitch pine cone, which had freshly fallen, and was closed perfectly tight. It was put into a table-drawer. To-day I am agreeably surprised that it has there dried and opened with perfect regularity, filling the drawer; and from a solid, narrow and sharp cone has become a broad, rounded, open one, — has, in fact, expanded into a conical flower with rigid scales, and has shed a remarkable quantity of delicate winged seeds. Each scale, which is very elaborately and perfectly constructed, is armed with a short spine pointing downward, as if to protect its seeds from squirrels and birds. That hard, closed cone, which defied all violent attempts to open it, and could only be cut open, has thus yielded to the gentle persuasion of warmth and dryness. The expanding of the pine cones, that, too, is a season.

February 27, 1854. . . . I remarked yesterday the rapidity with which water flowing over the icy ground sought its level. All that rain would hardly have produced a puddle in mid-

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summer, but now it produces a freshet, and will perhaps break up the river.

February 27, 1856. The papers are talking about the prospect of war between England and America. Neither side sees how its country can avoid a long and fratricidal war without sacrificing its honor. Both nations are ready to take a desperate step, to forget the interests of civilization and Christianity and their commercial prosperity, and fly at each other's throats. When I see an individual thus beside himself, thus desperate, ready to shoot or be shot like a blackleg, who has little to lose, no serene aims to accomplish, I think he is a candidate for bedlam. What asylum is there for nations to go to?

Nations are thus ready to talk of wars and challenge one another because they are made up, to such an extent, of poor, low-spirited, despairing men, in whose eyes the chance of shooting somebody else, without being shot themselves, exceeds their actual good fortune. Who, in fact, will be the first to enlist but the most desperate class, they who have lost all hope? And they may at last infect the rest. Will not war, at length, be thought disreputable, like dueling between individuals?

February 27, 1857. Before I opened the window this cold morning I heard the peep of a

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robin, that sound which is often heard in cheerless or else rainy weather, so often heard first borne on the cutting March wind, or through sleet or rain, as if its coming were premature.

February 27, 1858. . . . The hedges on the hill are all cut off. The journals think they cannot say too much on improvements in husbandry. But as for one of these farms brushed up, — a model farm, — I had as lief see a patent churn and a man turning it. It is simply a place where somebody is making money.

I see a snow bunting, though it is pleasant and warm.

February 27, 1859. P. M. To Cliffs; though it was a dry, powdery snow storm yesterday, the sun is now so high that the snow is soft and sticky this P. M. The sky, too, is soft to look at, and the air to feel on my cheek.

Health makes the poet, or sympathy with nature, a good appetite for his food, which is constantly renewing him, — whetting his senses. Pay for your victuals then with poetry, give back *life* for *life*.

February 27, 1860. 2 P. M. To Abner Buttrick's Hill. . . . I walk down by the river below Flint's, on the north side. The sudden apparition of the dark blue water on the surface of the earth is exciting. I must now walk where I can see the most water, as to the most

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living part of nature. This is the blood of the earth, and we see its blue arteries pulsing with new life now. I see from far over the meadows white cakes of ice gliding swiftly down the stream, — a novel sight. They are whiter than ever in this spring sun.

The abundance of light, as reflected from clouds and the snow, etc., etc., is more spring-like than anything else of late. . . . I had noticed for some time, far in the middle of the great meadows, something dazzling white, which I took, of course, to be a small cake of ice on its end; but now that I have climbed the pitch pine hill, and can overlook the whole meadow, I see it to be the white breast of a small shel-drake, accompanied, perhaps, by its mate, a darker one. They have settled warily in the very midst of the meadow, where the wind has blown a space of clear water for an acre or two. The aspect of the meadow is sky blue and dark blue, the former a thin ice, the latter the spaces of open water which the wind has made; but it is chiefly ice still. Thus as soon as the river breaks up, or begins to break up fairly, and the strong wind, widening the cracks, makes at length open spaces in the ice of the meadow, this hardy bird appears, and is seen sailing in the first widened crack in the ice where it can come at the water. Instead of a piece of ice I

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find it to be the breast of the sheldrake which so reflects the light as to look larger than it is, the bird steadily sailing this way and that with its companion, who is diving from time to time. They have chosen the opening farthest removed from all shores. As I look I see the ice drifting in upon them and contracting the water, till finally they have but a few square rods left, while there are forty or fifty acres near by. This is the first bird of the spring that I have seen or heard of.

February 28, 1841. Nothing goes by luck in composition; it allows of no trick. The best you can write will be the best you are. Every sentence is the result of a long probation. The author's character is read from title-page to end. Of this he never corrects the proofs. We read it as the essential character of a handwriting without regard to the flourishes. And so of the rest of our actions. It runs as straight as a ruled line through them all, no matter how many curvets about it. Our whole life is taxed for the least thing well done. It is its net result. How we eat, drink, sleep, and use our desultory hours now in these indifferent days, with no eye to observe and no occasion to excite us, determines our authority and capacity for the time to come.

February 28, 1852. To-day it snows again,

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covering the ground. To get the value of the storm, we must be out a long time and travel far in it, so that it may fairly penetrate our skin, and we be, as it were, turned inside out to it, and there be no part in us but is wet or weather-beaten, so that we become storm men, instead of fair-weather men. Some men speak of having been wet to the skin once as a memorable event in their lives, which, notwithstanding the croakers, they survived.

February 28, 1855. I observed how a new ravine was formed in that last thaw at Clamshell Hill. Much melted snow and rain being collected on the top of the hill, some apparently found its way through the ground frozen a foot thick, a few feet from the edge of the bank, and began with a small rill washing down the slope the unfrozen sand beneath. As the water continued to flow, the sand on each side continued to slide into it and be carried off, leaving the frozen crust above quite firm, making a bridge five or six feet wide over this cavern. Now since the thaw, this bridge, I see, has melted and fallen in, leaving a ravine some ten feet wide and much longer, which now may go on increasing from year to year without limit. I was there just after it began.

February 28, 1856. How simple the machinery of a saw-mill. M—— has dammed a

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stream, raised a pond or head of water, and placed an old horizontal mill-wheel in position to receive a jet on its buckets, transferred the motion to a horizontal shaft and saw, by a few cog-wheels and simple gearing; then throwing a roof of slabs over all, at the outlet of the pond, you have a mill. . . . A weight of water stored upon a meadow, applied to move a saw, which scratches its way through the trees placed before it, so simple is a saw-mill.

February 28, 1857. It is a singular infatuation that leads men to become clergymen in regular or even irregular standing. I pray to be introduced to new men at whom I may stop short and taste their peculiar sweetness. But in the clergyman of the most liberal sort I see no perfectly independent human nucleus, but I seem to see some indistinct scheme hovering about, to which he has lent himself, to which he belongs. It is a very fine cobweb in the lower stratum of the air, which stronger wings do not even discover. Whatever he may say, he does not know that one day is as good as another. Whatever he may say, he does not know that a man's creed can never be written, that there are no particular expressions of worship that deserve to be prominent. He dreams of a certain sphere to be filled by him something less in diameter than a great circle, may be not greater

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than a hogshead. All the staves are got out, and his sphere is already hooped. What 's the use of talking to him? When you spoke of sphere music, he thought only of a thumping on his cask. If he does not know something that nobody else does, that nobody told him, then he 's a tell-tale.

February 28, 1860. Passed a very little boy in the street to-day who had on a home-made cap of a woodchuck's skin, which his father or older brother had killed and cured, and his mother or older sister had fashioned into a nice warm cap. I was interested by the sight of it, it suggested so much of family history, adventure with the chuck, story told about it, not without exaggeration, the human parents, care of their young these hard times. Johnny had been promised a cap many times, and now the work was completed. A perfect little Idyl, as they say. The cap was large and round, big enough, you would say, for the boy's father, and had some kind of cloth visor stitched to it. The top of the cap was evidently the back of the woodchuck, as it were, expanded in breadth, contracted in length, and it was as fresh and handsome as if the woodchuck wore it himself. The great gray-tipped hairs were all preserved and stood out above the brown ones, only a little more loosely than in life. As if he had put

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his head into the belly of a woodchuck, having cut off his tail and legs, and substituted a visor for the head. The little fellow wore it innocently enough, not knowing what he had on forsooth, going about his small business pit-a-pat, and his black eyes sparkled beneath it when I remarked on its warmth, even as the woodchuck's might have done. Such should be the history of every piece of clothing that we wear.

As I stood by Eagle Field wall, I heard a fine rattling sound from some dry weeds at my elbow. It was occasioned by the wind rattling the fine seeds in those pods of the indigo-weed which were still closed, a distinct rattling din which drew my attention, like a small Indian calabash. Not a mere rustling of dry weeds, but the shaking of a rattle or a hundred rattles. . . .

As it is important to consider nature from the point of view of science, remembering the nomenclature and systems of men, and so, if possible, go a step further in that direction, so it is equally important often to ignore or forget all that men presume that they know, and take an original and unprejudiced view of Nature, letting her make what impression she will on you, as the first men, and all children, and natural men do. For our science, so called, is

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always more barren and mixed with error than our sympathies are.

As I go down the Boston road I see an Irishman wheeling home from far a large, damp, and rotten pine log for fuel. He evidently sweats at it and pauses to rest many times. He found, perhaps, that his woodpile was gone before the winter was, and he trusts thus to contend with the remaining cold. I see him unload it in his yard before me, and then rest himself. The piles of solid oak wood which I see in other yards do not interest me at all, but this looked like fuel. It warmed me to think of it. He will now proceed to split it finely, and then I fear it will require about as much heat to dry it as it will give out at last. How rarely we are encouraged by the sight of simple actions in the street. We deal with banks and other institutions where the life and humanity are concealed, what there is of it. I like at least to see the great beams half exposed in the ceiling or the corner.

February 28, 1861. P. M. Down Boston road under the hill. Air full of bluebirds, as yesterday. The sidewalk is bare and almost dry the whole distance under the hill. Turn in at the gate this side of Moore's, and sit on one of the yellowish stones rolled down in the bay of a digging, and examine the radical

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leaves, etc., etc. Where the edges of grassy banks have caved I see the fine fibrous roots of the grass, which have been washed bare during the winter, extending straight downward two feet (and how much further within the earth I know not), a pretty dense, grayish mass.

February 29, 1840. A friend advises by his whole behavior, and never condescends to particulars. Another chides away a fault; he loves it away. While he sees the other's error, he is silently conscious of it, and only the more loves truth itself, and assists his friend in loving it till the fault is expelled and gently extinguished.

February 29, 1852. Simplicity is the law of nature for men as well as for flowers. When the tapestry (corolla) of the nuptial bed (calyx) is excessive, luxuriant, it is unproductive. Linnæus says, "Luxuriant flowers are none natural, but all monsters," and so, for the most part, abortive, and when proliferous "they but increase the monstrous deformity." "Luxurians flos tegmenta fructificationis ita multiplicat ut essentiales equidem partes destruantur." "Oritur luxurians flos plerumque ab alimento luxuriante." Such a flower has no true progeny, and can only be reproduced by the humble mode of cuttings from its stem or roots.

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"Anthophilorum et hortulanorum deliciæ sunt flores pleni," not of nature. The fertile flowers are single, not double.

P. M. To Pine Hill across Walden. The high wind takes off the oak leaves. I see them scrambling up the slopes of the Deep Cut, hurry scurry like a flock of squirrels. . . . For the past month there has been more sea-room in the day, without so great danger of running aground on one of those two promontories that make it so arduous to navigate the winter day, the morning or the evening. It is a narrow pass, and you must go through with the tide. Might not some of my pages be called the short days of winter?

From Pine Hill looking westward I see the snow-crust shine in the sun as far as the eye can reach, — snow which fell yesterday morning. Then before night came the rain, then in the night the freezing northwest wind, and where day before yesterday half the ground was bare, is this sheeny snow-crust to-day.

March 1, 1838. Spring. March fans it, April christens it, and May puts on its jacket and trousers. It never grows up, but, Alexandrine-like, "drags its slow length along," — ever springing, bud following close upon leaf, — and when winter comes it is not annihilated, but creeps on mole-like under the snow, show-

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ing its face, nevertheless, occasionally by fuming springs and watercourses. So let our manhood be a more advanced and still advancing youth, bud following hard upon leaf. By the side of the ripening corn let 's have a second or third crop of peas and turnips, decking the fields in a new green. So amid clumps of sere herd's-grass sometimes flower the violet and buttercups, spring-born.

March 1, 1842. Whatever I learn from any circumstance, that especially I needed to know. Events come out of God, and our characters determine them and constrain fate as much as they determine the words and tone of a friend to us. Hence are they always acceptable in experience, and we do not see how we could have done without them.

March 1, 1854. Here is our first spring morning according to the almanac. It is remarkable that the spring of the almanac and of nature should correspond so closely. The morning of the 26th ult. was good winter; but then came a plentiful rain in the afternoon, and yesterday and to-day are quite spring-like. This morning the air is still, and, though clear enough, a yellowish light is widely diffused through the east now, just after sunrise. The sunlight looks and feels warm, and a fine vapor fills the lower atmosphere. I hear the phebe

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or spring note of the chickadee, and the scream of the jay is perfectly repeated by the echo from a neighboring wood. For some days past the surface of the earth, covered with water or with ice where the snow is washed off, has shone in the sun as it does only at the approach of spring, methinks, and are not the frosts in the morning more like the early frosts in the fall, — common white frosts? As for the birds of the past winter, I have seen but three hawks, one early in the winter, two lately; have heard the hooting owl pretty often late in the afternoon. Crows have not been numerous, but their cawing was heard chiefly in the pleasanter mornings. Blue-jays have blown the trumpet of winter as usual, but they, as all birds, are most lively in spring-like days. The chickadees have been the *prevailing* bird. The partridge common enough. One ditcher tells me that he saw two robins in Moore's swamp a month ago. I have not seen a quail, though a few have been killed in the thaws, — four or five downy woodpeckers. The white-breasted nuthatch four or five times. Tree-sparrows, one or more at a time, oftener than any bird that comes to us from the north. Two pigeon-woodpeckers, I think, lately. One dead shrike and perhaps one or two live ones. Have heard of two white owls, one about Thanksgiving time

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and one in midwinter; one short-eared owl in December; several flocks of snow buntings in the severest storm in the last part of December; one grebe in Walden, just before it froze completely, and two brown creepers once in the middle of February. C—— says he saw a little olivaceous green bird lately. I have not seen a *Fringilla linaria*, nor a pine grossbeak, nor a *Fringilla hiemalis* this winter, though the first was the prevailing bird last winter.

In correcting my MSS., which I do with sufficient phlegm, I find that I invariably turn out much that is good along with the bad, which it is then impossible for me to distinguish, — so much for keeping bad company; but after a lapse of time, having purified the main body and thus created a distinct standard for comparison, I can review the rejected sentences, and easily detect those which deserve to be readmitted.

P. M. To Walden by R. W. E.'s. I am surprised to see how bare Minott's hillside is already. It is spring there, and M. is puttering outside in the sun. How wise in his grandfather to select such a site for a house; the summers he has lived there have been so much longer. How pleasant the calm season and the warmth (the sun is even like a burning-glass on my back), and the sight and sound of melting

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snow running down the hill. I look in among the withering grass blades for some starting greenness. I listen to hear the first bluebird in the soft air. I hear the dry clucking of hens which have come abroad. The ice at Walden is softened. With a stick you can loosen it to the depth of an inch, or the first freezing, and turn it up in cakes. Yesterday you could skate here, now only close to the south shore. I notice the redness of the andromeda leaves, but not so much as once. The sand foliage is now in its prime.

March 1, 1855. It is a very pleasant and warm day, the finest yet, with considerable coolness in the air, however. Winter still. The air is beautifully clear, and through it I love to trace at a distance the roofs and outlines of sober-colored farm-houses amid the woods. We go listening for bluebirds, but only hear crows and chickadees. A fine seething air over the fair russet fields. The dusty banks of snow by the railroad reflect a wonderfully dazzling white from their pure crannies, being melted into an uneven, sharp-wavy surface. This more dazzling white must be due to the higher sun.

March 1, 1856. 9 A. M. To Flint's Pond *via* Walden, by railroad and the crust. I hear the hens cackle as not before for many months. Are they not beginning to lay? The catkins of

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the willow by the causeway and of the aspens appear to have pushed out a little farther than a month ago. I see the down of half a dozen on that willow by the causeway, on the aspens pretty generally. As I go through the cut it is still, warm, and more or less sunny, spring-like (about 40°); and the sand and reddish subsoil is bare for about a rod in width on the railroad. I hear several times the fine-drawn phebe note of the chickadee, which I heard only once during the winter. . . . It is remarkable that though I have not been able to find any open place in the river almost all winter, except under the further stone bridge and at Loring's Pond, this winter so remarkable for ice and snow, yet Coombs should (as he says) have killed two sheldrakes at the falls of the factory, a place which I had forgotten, — some four or six weeks ago; singular that this hardy bird should have found that small opening which I had forgotten, while the ice everywhere else was from one to two feet thick, and the snow sixteen inches on a level. If there is a crack amid the rocks of some waterfall, this bright diver is sure to know it. Ask the sheldrake whether the rivers are completely sealed up.

March 1, 1860. I have thoughts, as I walk, on some subject that is running in my head, but all their pertinence seems gone before I can

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get home to set them down. The most valuable thoughts which I entertain are anything but what *I* thought. Nature abhors a vacuum, and if I can only walk with sufficient carelessness, I am sure to be filled.

March 2, 1840. Love is the burden of all nature's odes, the song of the birds is an epithalamium, a hymeneal. The marriage of the flowers spots the meadows and fringes the hedges with pearls and diamonds. In the deep water, in the high air, in woods and pastures, and the bowels of the earth, this is the employment and condition of all things.

March 2, 1852. If the sciences are protected from being carried by assault by a palisade or chevaux-de-frise of technical terms, so also the learned man may ensconce himself and conceal his little true knowledge behind hard names. Perhaps the value of any statement may be increased by its susceptibility of being expressed in popular language. The greatest discoveries can be reported in the newspapers. I thought it was a great advantage both to speakers and hearers, when, at the meetings of scientific gentlemen at the Marlborough Chapel, the representatives of one department of science were required to speak intelligibly to those of other departments; therefore dispensing with the most peculiarly technical terms. A man may

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be permitted to state a very meagre truth to a fellow-student using technical terms, but when he stands up before the mass of men he must have some distinct and important truth to communicate, and the most important it will always be the most easy to communicate to the vulgar.

If anybody thinks a thought, how sure we are to hear of it. Though it be only a half thought or half a delusion, it gets into the newspapers, and all the country rings with it. But how much clearing of land, and ploughing and planting, and building of stone wall is done every summer without being reported in the newspapers or in literature. Agricultural literature is not as extensive as the fields, and the farmer's almanac is never a big book. Yet I think that the history (or poetry) of one farm from a state of nature to the highest state of cultivation comes nearer to being the true subject of a modern epic than the siege of Jerusalem or any such paltry and ridiculous romance to which some have thought men reduced. Was it Coleridge who said that the "Works and Days" of Hesiod, the Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil, are but leaves out of that epic? The turning of a swamp into a garden, though the poet may not think it an improvement, is at any rate an enterprise interesting to all men.

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A wealthy farmer, who has money to let, was here yesterday, who said that fourteen years ago a man came to him to hire two hundred dollars for thirty days. He told him that he should have it if he would give proper security. But the other, thinking it exorbitant to require security for so short a term, went away. He soon returned, however, and gave the security; "and," said the farmer, "he has punctually paid me twelve dollars a year ever since. I have never said a word to him about the principal."

March 2, 1854. What produces the peculiar softness of the air yesterday and to-day, as if it were the air of the south suddenly pillowed amid our wintry hills? We have suddenly a different sky, a different atmosphere. It is as if the subtlest possible soft vapor were diffused through the atmosphere. Warm air has come to us from the south, but charged with moisture which will yet distill into rain or congeal into snow and hail.

March 2, 1855. Another still, warm, beautiful day, like yesterday. 9 A. M. To Great Meadows to see the ice. These meadows, like all the rest, are one great field of ice a foot thick, to their utmost verge far up the hillsides and into the swamps, sloping upward there, without water under it, resting almost everywhere

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on the ground, a great undulating field of ice, rolling, prairie-like, the earth wearing this dry icy shield or armor, which shines in the sun. Over brooks and ditches, perhaps, and in many other places, the ice, sometimes a foot thick, is shoved (?) or puffed up in the form of a pent roof, in some places three feet high and stretching twenty or thirty rods. There is certainly more ice than could lie flat there, as if the adjacent masses had been moved toward each other. Yet this general motion is not likely, and it is more probably the result of the expansion of the ice under the sun, and of the warmth of the water (?) there. In many places the ice is dark and transparent, and you see plainly the bottom on which it lies. The various figures in the partially rotted ice are very interesting, white bubbles, which look like coins of various sizes overlapping each other, parallel waving lines, with sometimes very slight intervals on the underside of sloping white ice, marking the successive levels at which the water has stood; also countless white cleavages, perpendicular or inclined, straight and zigzag, meeting and crossing each other at all possible angles, and making all kinds of geometrical figures, checkering the whole surface like white frills or ruffles in the ice. At length it melts on the edge of these cleavages into little gutters which catch

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the snow. There is the greatest noise from the cracking of the ice about 10 A. M., as I noticed yesterday and to-day.

Where the last year's shoots or tops of the young white maples are brought together, as I walk toward a mass of them, one quarter of a mile off, with the sun on them, they present a fine dull scarlet streak. Young twigs are thus more fluid than the old wood, as if from their nearness to the flower, or like the complexion of children. You see thus a fine dash of red or scarlet against the distant hills which near at hand, or in the midst, is wholly unobservable. I go listening, but in vain, for the warble of the bluebird from the old orchard across the river. I love to look now at the fine-grained russet hillsides in the sun, ready to relieve and contrast with the azure of the bluebirds. I made a burning-glass of ice which produced a slight sensation of warmth on the back of my hand, but was so untrue that it did not concentrate the rays to a sufficiently small focus. Returning over Great Fields found half a dozen arrowheads, one with three scallops in the base. . . . Heard two hawks scream. There was something truly March-like in it, like a prolonged blast or whistling of the wind through a crevice in the sky, which, like a cracked blue saucer, overlaps the woods. Such are the first

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rude notes which prelude the summer's choir, learned of the whistling March wind.

March 2, 1856. Walking up the river by Prichard's was surprised to see on the snow over the river a great many seeds and scales of birches, though the snow had so recently fallen. There had been but little wind, and it was already spring. There was one seed or scale to a square foot, yet the nearest birches were, about fifteen of them, along the wall thirty rods east. As I advanced towards them the seeds became thicker and thicker till they quite discolored the snow half a dozen rods distant, while east of the birches there was not one. The birches appear not to have lost a quarter of their seeds yet. As I went home up the river, I saw some of the seeds forty rods off, and perhaps in a more favorable direction I might have found them much farther. It suggested how unwearied Nature is in spreading her seeds. Even the spring does not find her unprovided with birch, ay, and alder and pine seed. A great proportion of the seed that was carried to a distance lodged in the hollow over the river, and when the river breaks up will be carried far away to distant shores and meadows. . . .

I can hardly believe that hen-hawks may be beginning to build their nests now, yet their

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young were a fortnight old the last of April last year.

March 2, 1858. I walk through the Colburn farm pine woods, and thence to rear of John Hosmer's. See a large flock of snow buntings, the white birds of the winter, rejoicing in the snow. I stand near a flock in an open field. They are trotting about briskly over the snow, amid the weeds, apparently pigweed and Roman wormwood, as if to keep their toes warm hopping up to the weeds. Then they restlessly take to wing again, and as they wheel about one, it is a very rich sight to see them dressed in black and white uniforms, alternate black and white, very distinct and singular. Perhaps no colors would be more effective above the snow, black tips (considerably more) to wings, then clear white between this and the back, which is black or very dark again. . . . They alight again equally near. Their track is much like a small crow's track.

The last new journal thinks that it is very liberal, nay, bold; but it does not publish a child's thought on important subjects, such as life and death and good books. It requires the sanction of the divines just as surely as the tamest journal does. If it had been published at the time of the famous dispute between Christ and the doctors, it would have published

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only the opinions of the doctors and suppressed Christ's. There is no need of a law to check the license of the press. It is law enough and more than enough to itself. Virtually the community must have come together and agreed what things shall be uttered, have agreed on a platform and to excommunicate him who departs from it, and not one in a thousand dares utter anything else. There are plenty of journals brave enough to say what they think about the government, this being a free one; but I know of none widely circulated or well conducted that dares say what it thinks about the Sunday or the Bible. They have been bribed to keep dark. They are in the service of hypocrisy.

March 2, 1859. We talk about spring as at hand before the end of February, and yet it will be two good months, one sixth part of the whole year, before we can go a-Maying. There may be a whole month of solid and uninterrupted winter yet, plenty of ice and good sleighing. We may not even see the bare ground, and hardly the water; and yet we sit down and warm our spirits annually with the distant prospect of spring. As if a man were to warm his hands by stretching them towards the rising sun and rubbing them. We listen to the February cock-crowing and turkey gobbling as to a first course or prelude. The bluebird, which

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some woodchopper or inspired walker is said to have seen in that sunny interval between the snow storms, is like a speck of clear blue sky seen near the end of a storm, reminding us of an ethereal region, and a heaven which we had forgotten. Princes and magistrates are often styled serene, but what is their turbid serenity to that ethereal serenity which the bluebird embodies. His most serene Birdship! His soft warble melts in the ear as the snow is melting in the valleys around. The bluebird comes, and with his warble drills the ice, and sets free the rivers and ponds and frozen ground. As the sand flows down the slopes a little way, assuming the forms of foliage when the frost comes out of the ground, so this little rill of melody flows a short way down the concave of the sky.

The sharp whistle of the blackbird, too, is heard like single sparks, or a shower of them, shot up from the swamp and seen against the dark winter in the rear.

March 2, 1860. There is a strong westerly wind to-day, though warm, and we sit under Dennis's Lupine promontory to observe the water. A richer blue than the sky ever is. The flooded meadows are ripple lakes on a large scale. The bare landscape, though no growth is visible in it, is bright and spring-like.

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There is the tawny earth (almost completely bare) of different shades, lighter or darker, the light very light in this air, more so than the surface of the earth ever is (*i. e.*, without snow), bleached, as it were, and in the hollows of it, set round by the tawny hills and banks, is this copious, living, and sparkling blue water of various shades. It is more dashing, rippling, sparkling, living this windy but clear day, never smooth, but ever varying in its degree of motion and depth of blue, as the wind is more or less strong, rising and falling. All along the shore next us is a strip a few feet wide of very light and smooth sky-blue, for so much is sheltered ever by the lowest shore, but the rest is all more or less agitated and dark blue. In it are floating or stationary, here and there, cakes of white ice, the least looking like ducks, and large patches of water have a dirty-white or even tawny look where the ice still lies on the bottom of the meadow. Thus even the meadow flood is parded, of various patches of color. Ever and anon the wind seems to drop down from over the hills in strong puffs, and then spread and diffuse itself in dark, fan-shaped figures over the surface of the water. It is glorious to see how it sports on the watery surface. You see a hundred such nimble-footed puffs drop and spread on all sides at once, and

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dash on, sweeping the surface of the water for forty rods in a few seconds, as if so many invisible spirits were playing tag there. It even suggests some fine dust swept along just above the surface, and reminds me of snow blowing over ice — and vapor curling along a roof, meandering like that, often. The before dark blue is now diversified with much darker or blackish patches, with a suggestion of red, purplish even. . . . I am surprised to see that the billows which the wind makes are concentric curves, apparently reaching round from shore to shore of this broad bay forty rods wide or more. For this, two things may account, the greater force of the wind in the middle and the friction of the shores. When it blows hardest each successive billow (four or five feet apart or more) is crowned with a yellowish or dirty-white foam. The wind blows around each side of the hill, the opposite currents meeting, perchance, or it falls over the hill so that you have a field of ever-varying color, dark blue, blackish, yellowish, light blue, smooth sky-blue, purplish, and yellowish foam, all at once. Sometimes the wind visibly catches up the surface and blows it along and about in spray four or five feet high. The requisites are high water, mostly clear of ice, ground bare and sufficiently dry, weather warm enough, and wind strong

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and gusty. Then you may sit or stand on a hill and watch the play of the wind with the water. I know of no checker-board more interesting to watch. The wind, the gusts, comb the hair of the water-nymphs. You never tire of seeing it drop, spread, and sweep over the yielding and sensitive surface. The water is full of life, now rising into higher billows which would make your mast crack if you had any, now subsiding into lesser, dashing against and wearing away the still anchored ice, setting many small cakes adrift. How they entertain us with ever-changing scenes in the sky above or on the earth below. If the ploughman lean on his plough handle and look up or down, there is danger that he will forget his labor on that day.

March 3, 1838. Homer. Three thousand years and the world so little changed. The Iliad seems like a natural sound which has reverberated to our days. Whatever in it is still freshest in the memories of men was most childlike in the poet. It is the problem of old age, a second childhood exhibited in the life of the world. Phœbus Apollo went like night, ὁ δ' ἤϊε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς. This either refers to the gross atmosphere of the plague, darkening the sun, or to the crescent of night, rising solemn and stately in the east, while the sun is setting in the west.

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Then Agamemnon darkly lowers on Calchas, prophet of evil, ὅσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι ἐίκτην, such a fire-eyed Agamemnon as you may see at town meetings and elections, as well here as in Troy neighborhood.

March 3, 1839. The poet must be something more than natural, even supernatural. Nature will not speak through him, but along with him. His voice will not proceed from her midst, but, breathing on her, will make her the expression of his thought. He then poetizes when he takes a fact out of nature into spirit. He speaks without reference to time or place. His thought is one world, hers, another. He is another nature, nature's brother.

March 3, 1841. I hear a man blowing a horn this still evening, and it sounds like the plaint of nature in these times. In this which I refer to some man there is something greater than any man. It is as if the earth spoke. It adds a great remoteness to the horizon, and its very distance is grand, as when one draws back the head to speak. That which I now hear in the west seems like an invitation to the east. It runs round the earth as round a whispering gallery. All things great seem transpiring where this sound comes from. It is friendly as a distant hermit's taper. When it trills or undulates, the heavens are crumpled into time,

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and successive waves flow across them. It is a strangely healthy sound for these disjointed times. It is a rare soundness when cow-bells and horns are heard from over the fields. And now I see the full meaning and beauty of that word, sound. Nature always possesses a certain sonorousness, as in the hum of insects, the booming of ice, the crowing of cocks in the morning, and the barking of dogs in the night, which indicates her sound state. God's voice is but a clear bell sound. I drink in a wonderful health, a cordial, in sound. The effect of the slightest tinkling in the horizon measures my own soundness. I thank God for sound. It always mounts and makes me mount. I think I will not trouble myself for any wealth when I can be so cheaply enriched. Here I contemplate to drudge that I may own a farm, and may have such a limitless estate for the listening. All good things are cheap, all bad are very dear.

As for these communities, I think I had rather keep bachelor's hall in hell than go to board in heaven. Do not think your virtue will be boarded with you. It will never live on the interest of your money, depend upon it. The boarder has no home. In heaven I hope to bake my own bread and clean my own linen. The tomb is the only boarding-house in which

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a hundred are served at once. In the catacombs we may dwell together and prop one another up without loss.

March 3, 1857. To Fair Haven Hill. 3 P. M. 24° + in shade. The red maple sap, which I first noticed the 21st of February, is now frozen up in the auger holes, and thence down the trunk to the ground, except in one place where the hole was made on the south side of the tree, where it is melted and is flowing a little. Generally, then, when the thermometer is thus low, say below freezing point, it does not thaw in the auger holes. There is no expanding of buds of any kind, nor are early birds to be seen. Nature was, thus, premature, anticipated her own revolutions with respect to the sap of trees, the buds (spiræa, at least), and birds. The warm spell ended with February 26th.

The crust of yesterday's snow has been converted by the sun and wind into flakes of thin ice from two or three inches to a foot in diameter, scattered like a mackerel sky over the pastures, as if all the snow had been blown out from beneath. Much of this thin ice is partly opaque and has a glutinous look even, reminding me of frozen glue. Probably it has much dust mixed with it. . . . The slight robin snow of yesterday is already mostly dissipated, but

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where a heap still lingers the sun on the warm face of this cliff leads down a puny, trickling rill, moistening the gutters on the steep face of the rocks where patches of umbilicaria lichens grow, of rank growth, but now thirsty and dry as bones and hornets' nests, dry as shells which crackle under your feet. The more fortunate of these, which stand by the moistened seam or gutter of the rock, luxuriate in the grateful moisture as in the spring, their rigid nerves relax, they unbend and droop like limber infancy, and from dry ash and leather color turn a lively olive green. You can trace the course of this trickling stream over the rock through such a patch of lichens by the olive green of the lichens alone. Here and there the same moisture refreshes and brightens up the scarlet crown of some little cockscomb lichen, and when the rill reaches the perpendicular face of the cliff, its constant drip at night builds great organ pipes, of a ringed structure, which run together buttressing the rock. Skating yesterday and to-day.

March 3, 1859. Going by the solidago oak at Clam-shell Hill bank, I heard a faint rippling note, and looking up saw about fifteen snow buntings sitting in the top of the oak, all with their breasts toward me. Sitting so still, and quite white seen against the white cloudy

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sky, they did not look like birds, and their boldness, allowing me to come quite near, enhanced this impression. They were almost as white as snow-balls, and from time to time I heard a low, soft, rippling note from them. I could see no features, but only the general outline of plump birds in white. It was a very spectral sight, and after I had watched them for several minutes I can hardly say that I was prepared to see them fly away like ordinary buntings when I advanced further. At first they were almost concealed by being the same color with the cloudy sky. . . .

How imperceptibly the first springing takes place! In some still, muddy springs whose temperature is more equable than that of the brooks, while brooks and ditches generally are thickly frozen and concealed, and the earth is covered with snow, and it is even cold, hard, and nipping winter weather, some fine grass which fills the water begins to lift its tiny spears or blades above the surface, which directly fall flat for half an inch or an inch along the surface, and on these (though many are frost-bitten) you may measure the length to which the spring has advanced (has sprung); very few indeed, even of botanists, are aware of this growth. Some of it appears to go on even under ice and snow. Or, in such a place as

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I have described, if it is sheltered by alders or the like, you may see (as March 2d) a little green crescent of caltha leaves raised an inch or so above the water, the leaves but partially unrolled and looking as if they would withdraw beneath the surface again at night. This I think must be the most conspicuous and forward greenness of the spring. The small reddish, radical leaves of the dock, too, are observed flat on the moist ground as soon as the snow has melted there, as if they had grown beneath it.

Talk about reading! a good reader! It depends on how he is heard. There may be elocution and pronunciation (recitation say) to satiety, but there can be no good reading unless there is good hearing also. It takes two, at least, for this game, as for love, and they must coöperate. The lecturer will read but those parts of his lecture which are best heard. Sometimes, it is true, the faith and spirits of the reader run a little ahead and draw after the good hearing, and at other times the good hearing runs ahead and draws on the good reading. The reader and the hearer are a team not to be harnessed tandem, the poor wheel horse supporting the burden of the shafts, while the leader runs pretty much at will, the lecture lying passive in the painted curricle behind. I saw some

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men unloading molasses hogsheads from a truck at a depot the other day, by rolling them up an inclined plane. The truckman stood behind and shoved, after putting a couple of ropes, one round each end of the hogshead, while two men standing in the depot steadily pulled at the ropes. The first man was the lecturer, the others were the audience. It is the duty of the lecturer to team his hogshead of sweets to the depot or Lyceum, place the horse, arrange the ropes, and shove, and it is the duty of the audience to take hold of the ropes and pull with all their might. The lecturer who tries to read his essay without being abetted by a good hearing is in the predicament of a teamster who is engaged in the Sisyphean labor of rolling a molasses hogshead up an inclined plane alone, while the freight-master and his men stand indifferent with their hands in their pockets. I have seen many such a hogshead which had rolled off the horse and gone to smash with all the sweets wasted on the ground between the truckmen and the freight-house, and the freight-masters thought the loss was not theirs. Read well! Did you ever know a full well that did not yield of its refreshing waters to those who put their hands to the windlass or the well-sweep? Did you ever suck cider through a straw? Did you ever know the cider to push

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out of the straw when you were not sucking, unless it chanced to be in a complete ferment? An audience will draw out of a lecture, or enable a lecturer to read, only such parts of his lecture as they like. It is like a barrel half full of some palatable liquor. You may tap it at various levels, in the sweet liquor, or in the froth, or in the fixed air above. If it is pronounced good, it is partly to the credit of the hearers; if bad, it is partly their fault. Sometimes a lazy audience refuses to coöperate and pull at the ropes because the hogshead is full and therefore heavy, when if it were empty, or had only a little sugar adhering to it, they would whisk it up the slope in a jiffy. The lecturer therefore desires of his audience a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together. I have seen a sturdy (truckman) lecturer who had nearly broken his back with shoving his lecture up such an inclined plane, while the audience were laughing at him, at length, as with a last effort, set it a-rolling in amid the audience and upon their toes, scattering them like sheep and making them cry out with pain, while he drove proudly away. Rarely it is a very heavy freight of such hogsheads stored in a vessel's hold that is to be lifted out and deposited on the public wharf, and this is accomplished only after many a hearty pull and a good deal of heave-yo-ing.

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March 3, 1860. 2 P. M. 50° +. Overcast and somewhat rain-threatening. Wind southwest. To Abner Buttrick and Tarbell Hills. See a flock of large ducks in a line (may be black?) over Great Meadows, also a few sheldrakes. It was pleasant to hear the tinkling of very coarse brash, broken, honey-combed, dark ice, rattling one piece against another along the northeast shores, to which it had drifted. Scarcely any ice now about river except what rests on the bottom of the meadow, dirty with sediment. The first song-sparrows are very inconspicuous and shy on the brown earth. You hear some weeds rustle, or think you see a mouse run amid the stubble, and then the sparrow flies low away.

March 4, 1840. I learned to-day that my ornithology had done me no service. The birds I heard, which fortunately did not come within the scope of my science, sang as freshly as if it had been the first morning of creation, and had for background to their song an untrodden wilderness stretching through many a Carolina and Mexico of the soul.

March 4, 1841. Ben Jonson says in his epigrams, "He makes himself a thoroughfare of vice." This is true, for by vice the substance of a man is not changed, but all his pores and cavities and avenues are profaned by being

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made the thoroughfares of vice. The searching devil courses through and through him. His flesh and blood and bones are cheapened. He is all trivial, a place where three highways of sin meet. So is another the thoroughfare of virtue, and virtue circulates through all his aisles like a wind, and he is hallowed.

We reprove each other unconsciously by our own behavior. Our very carriage and demeanor in the streets should be a reprimand that will go to the conscience of every beholder. An infusion of love from a great soul gives a color to our faults which will discover them as lunar caustic detects impurities in water. The best will not seem to go contrary to others; but as if they could afford to travel the same way, they go a parallel but higher course. Jonson says, —

> "That to the vulgar canst thyself apply,
> Treading a better path, not contrary."

March 4, 1852. It is discouraging to talk with men who will recognize no principles. How little use is made of reason in this world! You argue with a man for an hour, he agrees with you step by step, you are approaching a triumphant conclusion, you think that you have converted him, but, ah, no, he has a habit, he takes a pinch of snuff, he remembers that he entertained a different opinion at the commence-

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ment of the controversy, and his reverence for the past compels him to reiterate it now. You began at the butt of the pole to curve it, you gradually bent it round according to rule, and planted the other end in the ground, and already in imagination saw the vine curling round this segment of an arbor, under which a new generation was to recreate itself, but when you had done, it sprang back to its former stubborn and unhandsome position like a bit of whalebone.

10 A. M. Up river on ice to Fairhaven Pond. . . . We have this morning the clear, cold, continent sky of January. The river is frozen solidly, and I do not have to look out for openings. Now I can take that walk along the river highway and the meadow which leads me under the boughs of the maples and the swamp white oaks, etc., which in summer overhang the water. I can now stand at my ease and study their phenomena amid the sweet gale and button bushes projecting above the snow and ice. I see the shore from the water side; a liberal walk, so level, wide, and smooth, without underbrush. In some places where the ice is exposed I see a kind of crystallized chaffy snow like little bundles of asbestos on its surface. I seek some sunny nook on the south side of a wood which keeps off the cold wind, among the maples and the swamp white oaks, and there

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sit and anticipate the spring and hear the chickadees and the belching of the ice. The sun has got a new power in his rays after all, cold as the weather is. He could not have warmed me so much a month ago, nor should I have heard such rumblings of the ice in December. I see where a maple has been wounded, the sap is flowing out. Now, then, is the time to make sugar.

If I were to paint the short days of winter I should represent two towering icebergs approaching each other like promontories, for morning and evening, with cavernous recesses, and a solitary traveler wrapping his cloak about him and bent forward against a driving storm, just entering the narrow pass. I would paint the light of a taper at midday, seen through a cottage window, half buried in snow and frost. . . . In the foreground should appear the harvest, and far in the background, through the pass, should be seen the sowers in the fields and other evidences of spring. On the right and left of the approaching icebergs the heavens should be shaded off from the light of midday to midnight with its stars, the sun being low in the sky.

I look between my legs up the river across Fair Haven. Subverting the head, we refer things to the heavens; the sky becomes the

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ground of the picture, and where the river breaks through low hills which slope to meet each other one quarter of a mile off, appears a mountain pass, so much nearer is it to heaven. We are compelled to call it something which relates it to the heavens rather than the earth.

Now at eleven and a half, perhaps, the sky begins to be slightly overcast. The northwest is the god of the winter, as the southwest of the summer. The forms of clouds are interesting, often, as now, like flames, or more like the surf curling before it breaks, reminding me of the prows of ancient vessels which have their pattern or prototype again in the surf, as if the wind made a surf of the mist. Thus as the fishes look up at the waves, we look up at the clouds. It is pleasant to see the reddish green leaves of the lambkill still hanging with fruit above the snow, for I am now crossing the shrub oak plain to the Cliffs. I find a place on the south side of this rocky hill where the snow is melted and the bare gray rock appears covered with mosses and lichens and beds of oak leaves in the hollows, where I can sit, and an invisible flame and smoke seem to ascend from the leaves, and the sun shines with a genial warmth, and you can imagine the hum of bees amid flowers. The heat reflected from the dry leaves reminds you of the sweet fern and

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those summer afternoons which are longer than a winter day, though you sit on a mere oasis in the snow. The snow is melting on the rocks, the water trickles down in shining streams, the mosses look bright; the first awakening of vegetation is at the root of the saxifrage. As I go by the farmer's yard the hens cackle more solidly, as if eggs were the burden of the strain.

A horse's fore legs are handier than his hind ones, the latter but fall into the place which the former have found. They have the advantage of being nearer the head, the source of intelligence. He strikes and paws with them. It is true he kicks with the hind legs. But that is a very simple and unscientific action, as if his whole body were a whiplash and his heels the snapper.

The constant reference in our lives, even in the most trivial matters, to the superhuman is wonderful. If a portrait is painted, neither the wife's opinion of the husband, nor the husband's opinion of the wife, nor either's opinion of the artist, not man's opinion of man, is final and satisfactory. Man is not the final judge of the humblest work, though it be piling wood. The queen and the chambermaid, the king and the hired man, the Indian and the slave, alike appeal to God.

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Each man's mode of speaking of the sexual relation proves how sacred his own relations of that kind are. We do not respect the mind that can jest on this subject.

March 4, 1854. P. M. To Walden. In the meadow I see some still fresh and perfect pitcher plant leaves, and everywhere the green and reddish radical leaves of the golden senecio, whose fragrance when bruised carries me back or forward to an incredible season. Who would believe that under the snow and ice lie still, or in mid-winter, some green leaves which bruised yield the same odor that they do when their yellow blossoms spot the meadows in June. Nothing so realizes the summer to me now. In the dry pastures under the Cliff Hill, the radical leaves of the Johnswort are now revealed everywhere in pretty radiating wreaths flat on the ground. These leaves are recurved, reddish above, green beneath, and covered with dewy drops. I see nowadays, the ground being laid bare, great cracks in the earth revealed, a third of an inch wide, running with a crinkling line for twenty rods or more through the pastures and under the walls, frost cracks of the past winter. Sometimes they are revealed through ice four or five inches thick over them. I observed to-day where a crack had divided a piece of bark lying over it with the same

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irregular and finely meandering lines, sometimes forking.

March 4, 1855. P. M. Though there is a cold and strong wind, it is very warm in the sun, and we can sit in it when sheltered by these rocks with impunity. It is a genial warmth. The rustle of the dry leaves on the earth and in the crannies of the rocks, and gathered in deep windrows just under their edge, midleg deep, reminds me of fires in the woods. They are almost ready to burn.

March 4, 1859. We stood still a few moments on the turnpike below Wright's (the turnpike which has no wheel track beyond Tuttle's and no track at all beyond Wright's), and listened to hear a spring bird. We heard only the jay screaming in the distance and the cawing of a crow. What a perfectly New England sound is this voice of the crow! If you stand perfectly still anywhere in the outskirts of the town and listen, stilling the almost incessant hum of your personal factory, this is perhaps the sound which you will be most sure to hear, rising above all sounds of human industry, and leading your thoughts to some far bay in the woods, where the crow is venting his disgust. This bird sees the white man come and the Indian withdraw, but it withdraws not. Its untamed voice is still heard above the tinkling

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of the forge. It sees a race pass away, but it passes not away. It remains to remind us of aboriginal nature.

March 5, 1841. How can our love increase unless our loveliness increases also. We must securely love each other as we love God, with no more danger that our love be unrequited or ill-bestowed. There is that in my friend before which I must first decay and prove untrue. Love is the least moral and the most. Are the best good in their love? or the worst, bad?

March 5, 1852. It is encouraging to know that though every kernel of truth has been carefully swept out of our churches, there yet remains the dust of truth on their walls, so that if you should carry a light into them, they would still, like some powder-mills, blow up at once.

3 P. M. To the Beeches. A misty afternoon, but warm, threatening rain. Standing on Walden, whose eastern shore is laid waste, men walking on the hillside a quarter of a mile off are singularly interesting objects, seen through the mist, which has the effect of a mirage. The persons of the walkers are black on the snowy ground, and the limited horizon makes them the more important in the scene. This kind of weather is very favorable to our landscape. I must not forget the lichen-painted boles of the beeches.

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Round to the white bridge, where the red-maple buds are already much expanded, foretelling summer, though our eyes see only winter as yet. As I sit under their boughs looking into the sky, I suddenly see the myriad black dots of the expanded buds against the sky. Their sap is flowing. The elm buds, too, I find are expanded, though on earth are no signs of spring. I find myself inspecting little granules, as it were, on the bark of trees, little shields or apothecia springing from a thallus, and I call it studying lichens. That is merely the prospect which is afforded me. It is short commons and innutritious. Surely I might take wider views. The habit of looking at things microscopically, as the lichens on the trees and rocks, really prevents my seeing aught else in a walk. Would it not be noble to study the shield of the sun on the thallus of the sky, cerulean, which scatters its infinite sporules of light through the universe? To the lichenist is not the shield (or rather the apothecium) of a lichen disproportionately large compared with the universe?

March 5, 1853. F. Browne showed me some lesser redpolls which he shot yesterday. They turn out to be my falsely called chestnut-frontleted bird of the winter. "*Linaria minor*, Ray. Lesser Redpoll Linnet. From Pennsylvania and

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New Jersey to Maine, in winter; inland to Kentucky. Breeds in Maine, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador, and the fur countries." Aud. Synopsis. They have a sharp bill, black legs and claws, and a bright crimson crown or frontlet, in the male reaching to the base of the bill, with, in his case, a delicate rose or carmine on the breast and rump. Though this is described in Nuttall as an occasional visitor in the winter, it has been the prevailing bird here this winter.

Yesterday I got my grape cuttings. The day before went to the Corner spring to look at the tufts of green grass. . . . Was pleased with the sight of the yellow osiers of the golden willow and the red of the cornel, now colors are so rare. Saw the green fine-threaded conferva in a ditch, commonly called frog spittle. Brought it home in my pocket and it expanded again in a tumbler. It appeared quite a fresh growth, with what looked like filmy air-bubbles as big as large shot in its midst.

The Secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Science requested me, as he probably has thousands of others, by a printed circular letter from Washington, the other day, to fill the blanks against certain questions, among which the most important one was what branch of science I was specially interested in,

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using the term science in the most comprehensive sense possible. Now, though I could state to a select few that department of human inquiry which engages me, and should rejoice at an opportunity so to do, I felt that it would be to make myself the laughing stock of the scientific community to describe to them that branch of science which specially interests me, inasmuch as they do not believe in a science which deals with the higher law. So I was obliged to speak to their condition and describe to them that poor part of me which alone they can understand. The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot. Now I think of it, I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist; that would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations. How absurd that though I probably stand as near to Nature as any of them, and am by constitution as good an observer as most, yet a true account of my relation to Nature should excite their ridicule only. If it had been the secretary of an association of which Plato or Aristotle was the president, I should not have hesitated to describe my studies at once and particularly.

March 5, 1856. To Carlisle, surveying. I had two friends. The one offered me friend-

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ship on such terms that I could not accept it without a sense of degradation. He would not meet me on equal terms, but only be to some extent my patron. He would not come to see me, but was hurt if I did not visit him. He would not readily accept a favor, but would gladly confer one. He treated me with ceremony occasionally, though he could be simple and downright sometimes. From time to time he acted a part, treating me as if I were a distinguished stranger, was on stilts, using made words. Our relation was one long tragedy, yet I did not directly speak of it. I do not believe in complaint, nor in explanations. The whole is but too plain, alas, already. We grieve that we do not love each other. I could not bring myself to speak and so recognize an obstacle to our affection.

I had another friend, who through a slight obtuseness, perchance, did not recognize a fact which the dignity of friendship would by no means allow me to descend so far as to speak of, and yet the inevitable effect of that ignorance was to hold us apart forever.

March 5, 1858. We read the English poets, we study botany and zoölogy and geology, lean and dry as they are, and it is rare that we get a new suggestion. It is ebb tide with the scientific reports, Professor —— in the chair. We

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would fain know something more about these animals and stones and trees around us. We are ready to skin the animals alive to come at them. Our scientific names convey a very partial information, they suggest certain thoughts only. It does not occur to me that there are other names for most of these objects, given by a people who stood between me and them, who had better senses than our race. How little I know of that *arbor vitæ* when I have heard only what science can tell me. It is but a word, it is not a *tree* of *life*. But there are twenty words for the tree and its different parts which the Indian gave, which are not in our botanies, which imply a more practical and vital science. He used it every day. He was well acquainted with its wood, its bark, and its leaves. No science does more than arrange what knowledge we have of any class of objects. But generally speaking, how much more conversant was the Indian with any wild animal or plant than we, and in his language is implied all that intimacy, as much as ours is expressed in our language. How many words in his language about a moose, or birch bark, and the like. The Indian stood nearer to wild nature than we. The wildest and noblest quadrupeds, even the largest fresh water fish, some of the wildest and noblest birds, and the fairest flowers have actually receded as

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we advanced, and we have but the most distant knowledge of them. A rumor has come down to us that the skin of a lion was seen and his roar heard here by an early settler. But there was a race here that slept on his skin. It was a new light when my guide gave me Indian names for things for which I had only scientific ones before. In proportion as I understood the language, I saw them from a new point of view.

A dictionary of the Indian language reveals another and wholly new life to us. Look at the word canoe, and see what a story it tells of out-door life, with the names of all its parts and of the modes of driving it, as our words describe the different parts of a coach; or at the word wigwam, and see how close it brings you to the ground; or at Indian corn, and see which race has been most familiar with it. It reveals to me a life within a life, or rather a life without a life, as it were threading the woods between our towns, and yet we can never tread on its trail. The Indian's earthly life was as far off from us as heaven is.

I saw yesterday a musquash sitting on thin ice on the Assabet, by a hole which it had kept open, gnawing a white root. Now and then it would dive and bring up more. I waited for it to dive again that I might run nearer to it meanwhile, but it sat ten minutes all wet in the

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freezing wind while my feet and ears grew numb, so tough it is. At last I got quite near. When I frightened it, it dove with a sudden slap of its tail. I feel pretty sure that this is an involuntary movement, the tail, by the sudden turn of the body, being brought down on the water or ice like a whiplash.

March 5, 1859. Going down town this A. M. I heard a white-bellied nuthatch on an elm within twenty feet, uttering peculiar notes and more like a song than I remember to have heard from it. There was a chickadee close by to which it may have been addressed. It was something like "To-*what what what what what*" rapidly repeated, and not the usual "*quah quah.*" And this instant it occurs to me that this may be that earliest spring note which I hear and have referred to a woodpecker! This is before I have chanced to see a bluebird, blackbird, or robin in Concord this year. It is the spring note of the nuthatch. It paused in its progress about the trunk or branch, and uttered this lively but peculiarly inarticulate song, an awkward attempt to warble almost in the face of the chickadee, as if it were one of its kind. It was thus giving vent to the spring within it. If I am not mistaken, this is what I have heard in former springs or winters long ago, fabulously early in the season,

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when we men had but just begun to anticipate the spring, for it would seem that we in our anticipations and sympathies include in succession the moods and expressions of all creatures. When only the snow had begun to melt and no rill of song had broken loose, a note so dry and fettered still, so inarticulate and half thawed out, that you might and would commonly mistake it for the tapping of a woodpecker. As if the young nuthatch in its hole had listened only to the tapping of woodpeckers and learned that music, and now when it would sing and give vent to its spring ecstasy, it can modulate only some notes like that. That is its theme still. That is its ruling idea of song and music. Only a little clangor and liquidity added to the tapping of the woodpecker. It was the handle by which my thoughts took firmly hold on spring. This herald of spring is commonly unseen, it sits so close to the bark.

March 5, 1860. The old naturalists were so sensitive and sympathetic toward nature that they could be surprised by the ordinary events of life. It was an incessant miracle to them, and therefore gorgons and flying dragons were not incredible. The greatest and saddest defect is not credulity, but an habitual forgetfulness that our science is ignorance.

As we sat under Lupine promontory the other

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day, watching the ripples that swept over the flooded meadows, and thinking what an eligible site that would be for a cottage, C—— declared that we did not live in the country as long as we lived in that village street and only took walks into the fields, any more than if we lived in Boston or New York. We enjoyed none of the immortal quiet of the country as we might here, for instance, but, perchance, the first sound that we hear in the morning, instead of the note of a bird, is some neighbor's hawking and spitting.

March 6, 1840. There is no delay in answering great questions; for them all things have an answer ready. The Pythian priestess gave her answers instantly, and ofttimes before the questions were fairly propounded. Great topics do not wait for past or future to be determined; but the state of the crops or Brighton market, no bird concerns itself about.

March 6, 1841. An honest misunderstanding is often the ground of future intercourse.

March 6, 1853. P. M. To Lee's Hill. I am pleased to cut the small woods with my knife to see their color. The high blueberry, hazel, and swamp pink are green. I love to see the clear green sprouts of the sassafras, and its large and fragrant buds and bark. The twigs and branches of young trees twenty feet high look as if scorched and blackened.

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The water is pretty high on the meadows (though the ground is covered with snow) so that we get a little of the peculiar still lake view at evening when the wind goes down.

Two red squirrels made an ado about or above me near the North River, hastily running from tree to tree, leaping from the extremity of one bough to that of another on the next tree, until they gained and ascended a large white pine. I approached and stood under this, while they made a great fuss about me. One at length came part way down to reconnoitre me. It seemed that one did the barking, a faint, short, chippy bark, like that of a *toy* dog, its tail vibrating each time, while its neck was stretched over a bough as it peered at me. The other, higher up, kept up a sort of gurgling whistle, more like a bird than a beast. When I made a noise, they would stop a moment.

Scared up a partridge which had crawled into a pile of wood. Saw a gray hare, a dirty yellowish gray, not trig and neat, but, as usual, apparently in dishabille. As it frequently does, it ran a little way and stopped just at the entrance to its retreat, then, when I moved again, suddenly disappeared. By a slight obscure hole in the snow it had access to a large and apparently deep woodchucks' hole.

March 6, 1854. The water here and there

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on the meadow begins to appear smooth, and I look to see it rippled by a muskrat. The earth has, to some extent, frozen dry, for the drying of the earth goes on in the cold night as well as the warm day. The alders and hedgerows are still silent, emit no notes.

According to G. B. Emerson, maple sap sometimes begins to flow in the middle of February, but usually in the second week in March, especially in a clear bright day with a westerly wind, after a frosty night. . . . I saw trout glance in the Mill Brook this afternoon, though near its sources in Hubbard's Close it is still covered with dark icy snow, and the river into which it empties has not broken up. Can they have come up from the sea? Like a film or shadow they glance before the eye, and you see where the mud is roiled by them. . . . I see the skunk-cabbage started about the spring at head of Hubbard's Close, amid the green grass, and what looks like the first probing of the skunk. . . . The ponds are hard enough for skating again. Heard and saw the first blackbird flying east over the Deep Cut, with a *tchuck-tchuck*, and finally a split whistle.

March 6, 1855. To Second Division Brook. . . . Observed a mouse's nest in Second Division meadow, where it had been made under the snow, a nice, warm, globular nest, some five

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inches in diameter, amid the sphagnum, cranberry vines, etc., made of dried grass and lined with a still finer grass. The hole was on one side, and the bottom was near two inches thick. There were many small paths or galleries in the meadow leading to this from the brook some rod or more distant.

The small gyrinus is circling in the brook. I see where much fur of a rabbit, which probably a fox was carrying, has caught on a moss-rose twig as he leaped a ditch. . . . There is a peculiar redness in the western sky just after sunset. There are many great dark slate-colored clouds floating there, seen against more distant and thin wispy, bright, vermillion, (?) almost blood-red ones, which in many places appear as the lining of the former. . . . I see in many places where, after the late freshet, the musquash made their paths under the ice, leading from the water a rod or two to a bed of grass above the water level.

March 6, 1858. P. M. Up river on ice to Fair Haven Pond. The river is frozen more solidly than during the past winter, and for the first time for a year I could cross it in most places. I did not once cross it the past winter, though by choosing a safe place I might have done so without doubt once or twice. But I have had no river walks before. I see the first

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hen-hawk or hawk of any kind, methinks, since the beginning of winter. Its scream, even, is inspiring, as the voice of a spring bird.

That light spongy bark about the base of the nessæa appears to be good tinder. I have only to touch one end to a coal and it all burns out slowly, without blazing, in whatever position held, and even after being dipped in water.

Sunday, March 6, 1859. P. M. To Yellow Birch Swamp. We go through the swamp near Bee Tree or Oak Ridge listening for blackbirds or robins, and in the old orchard for bluebirds. Found between two of the little birches in the path, where they grow densely, in indigo-bird sproutland, a small nest suspended between one and two feet from the ground. This is where I have seen the indigo-bird in summer, and the nest apparently answers to Wilson's account of that bird, being fastened with saliva to the birch on each side. Wilson says, "It is built in a low bush, . . . suspended between two twigs, one passing up each side." It is about the diameter of a hair-bird's nest within, composed chiefly of fine bark shreds looking like grass, and one or two strips of grapevine bark, and very securely fastened to the birch on each side by a whitish silk or cobweb and saliva. It is thin, the lining being probably gone.

March 6, 1860. P. M. Fair and spring-like

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i. e., rather still for March, with some raw wind. Pleasant in sun. Going by Messer's I hear the well-known note and see a flock of *Fringilla hiemalis*, flitting in a lively manner about trees, weeds, walls, and ground by the roadside, showing their two white tail feathers. They are more fearless than the song-sparrow. They attract notice by their numbers and incessant twittering in a social manner. The linarias have been the most numerous birds here the past winter. I can scarcely see a heel of a snow-drift from my window. Jonas Melvin says he saw hundreds of "speckled" turtles out on the banks to-day in a voyage to Billerica for musquash. Also saw gulls. Sheldrakes and black ducks are the only ones he has seen this year. A still and mild moonlight night, and people walking about the streets.

March 7, 1838. We should not endeavor coolly to analyze our thoughts, but, keeping the pen even and parallel with the current, make an accurate transcript of them. Impulse is, after all, the best linguist; its logic, if not conformable to Aristotle, cannot fail to be most convincing. The nearer we can approach to a complete but simple transcript of our thought, the more tolerable will be the piece, for we can endure to consider ourselves in a state of passivity or in involuntary action, but rarely can we

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endure to consider our efforts, and, least of all, our rare efforts.

March 7, 1852. At 9 o'clock P. M. to the woods by the full moon. . . . Going through the high field beyond the lone grave-yard, I see the track of a boy's sled before me, and his footsteps shining like silver between me and the moon; and now I come to where they have coasted in a hollow in the upland beanfield, and there are countless tracks of sleds. I forget that the sun shone on them in their sport, as if I had reached the region of perpetual twilight, and their sports appear more significant and symbolical now, more earnest. For what a man does abroad by night requires and implies more deliberate energy than what he is encouraged to do in the sunshine. He is more spiritual, less animal and vegetable, in the former case. . . . This stillness is more impressive than any sound. The moon, the stars, the trees, the snow, the sand when bare, a monumental stillness whose void must be supplied by thought. It extracts thought from the beholder like the void under a cupping-glass raises a swelling. How much a silent mankind might suggest! . . . The moon appears to have waned a little, yet with this snow on the ground I can plainly see the words I write. . . . I do not know why such emphasis should be laid on certain events that tran-

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spire, why my news should be so trivial; considering what one's dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. These facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi, and impinge on my thallus. Some neglected surface of my mind affords a basis for them, and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Methinks I should hear with indifference if a trustworthy messenger were to inform me that the sun drowned himself last night.

March 7, 1853. What is the earliest sign of spring? The motion of worms and insects? The flow of sap in trees and the swelling of buds? Do not the insects awake with the flow of the sap? Bluebirds, etc., probably do not come till the insects come out. Or are there earlier signs in the water, the tortoises, frogs, etc.? The little cup and cocciferæ lichens mixed with other cladonias of the reindeer moss kind are full of fresh fruit to-day. The scarlet apothecia of the cocciferæ on the stumps and earth partly covered with snow, with which they contrast, I never saw more fresh and brilliant. But they shrivel up and lose their brightness by the time you get them home. The only birds I *see* to-day are the lesser redpolls. I have not seen a fox-colored sparrow or a *Fringilla hiemalis*.

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March 7, 1854. P. M. To Anursnack. . . . Heard the first bluebird, something like *pe-a-wor*, and then other slight warblings as if farther off. Was surprised to see the bird within seven or eight rods on the top of an oak on the orchard's edge under the hill. But he appeared silent, while I heard others faintly warbling and twittering far in the orchard. When he flew I heard no more, and then I suspected that he had been ventriloquizing, as if he hardly dared open his mouth yet while there was so much winter left. It is an overcast and moist, but rather warm afternoon. He revisits the apple-trees and appears to find some worms. Probably not till now was his food to be found abundantly. Saw some fuzzy gnats in the air. . . . The river channel is nearly open everywhere. Saw on the alders by the river-side front of Hildreth's a song-sparrow quirking its tail. It flew across the river to the willows, and soon I heard its well-known dry *tchip-tchip*.

March 7, 1858. Walking by the river this P. M., it being half open, and the waves running pretty high, the black waves, yellowish where they break over ice, I inhale a fresh meadowy spring odor from them which is a little exciting. It is like the fragrance of tea to an old tea-drinker.

March 7, 1859. 6½ A. M. To Hill. I

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came out to hear a spring bird, the ground generally covered with snow yet, and the channel of the river only partly open. On the hill I hear first the tapping of a small woodpecker. I then see a bird alight on the dead top of the highest white oak on the hilltop, on the topmost point. It is a shrike. While I am watching him eight or ten rods off, I hear robins down below, west of the hill. Then to my surprise the shrike begins to sing. It is at first a wholly ineffectual and inarticulate sound, without any solid tone, a mere hoarse breathing, as if he were clearing his throat, unlike any bird that I know, a shrill hissing. Then he uttered a kind of mew, a very decided mewing, clear and wiry, between that of a catbird and the note of the nuthatch, as if to lure a nuthatch within his reach. Then rose with the sharpest, shrillest vibratory or tremulous whistling, or chirruping on the very highest key. This high gurgling jingle was like some of the notes of a robin singing in summer. But they were very short spurts in all these directions, though there was all this variety. Unless you saw the shrike, it would be hard to tell what bird it was. These various notes covered considerable time, but were sparingly uttered with intervals. It was a decided chinking sound, the clearest strain, suggesting much ice in the stream. I heard

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this bird sing once before, but that was also in early spring, or about this time. It is said that they imitate the notes of other birds in order to attract them within their reach. Why then have I never heard them sing in the winter? I have seen seven or eight of them the past winter quite near. The birds which it imitated, if it imitated any this morning, were the catbird and the nuthatch, neither of which, probably, would it catch. The first is not here to catch. Hearing a peep I looked up and saw three or four birds passing which suddenly descended and settled on this oak top. They were robins, but the shrike instantly hid himself behind a bough, and in half a minute flew off to a walnut and alighted, as usual, on its very topmost twig, apparently afraid of its visitors. The robins kept their ground, one alighting on the very point which the shrike vacated. Is not this, then, probably the spring note or pairing song of the shrike? The first note which I heard from the robins far under the hill was *sveet sveet*, suggesting a certain haste and alarm, and then a rich, hollow, somewhat plaintive *peep* or *peep - eep - eep*, as when in distress with young just flown. When you first see them alighted, they have a haggard, an anxious and hurried look. . . .

The mystery of the life of plants is kindred

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with that of our own lives, and the physiologist must not presume to explain their growth according to mechanical laws, or as he would explain a machine of his own making. We must not expect to probe with our fingers the sanctuary of any life, whether animal or vegetable. If we do, we shall discover nothing but surface still. The ultimate expression or fruit of any created thing is a fine effluence which only the most ingenuous worshiper perceives at a reverent distance from its surface even. The cause and the effect are equally evanescent and intangible, and the former must be investigated in the same spirit and with the same reverence with which the latter is perceived. Science is often like the grub which, though it may have nestled in the germ of a fruit, has merely blighted or consumed it, never truly tasted it. Only that intellect makes any progress toward conceiving of the essence which at the same time perceives the effluence. The rude and ignorant finger is probing in the rind still, for in this case, too, the angles of incidence and excidence are equal, and the essence is as far on the other side of the surface or matter as reverence detains the worshiper on this, and only reverence can find out this angle instinctively. Shall we presume to alter the angle at which God chooses to be worshiped? Accord-

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ingly, I reject Carpenter's explanation of the fact that a potato-vine in a cellar grows toward the light, when he says, "The reason obviously is that in consequence of loss of fluid from the tissue of the stem on the side on which the light falls, it is contracted, whilst that of the other side remains turgid with fluid; the stem makes a bend, therefore, until its growing point becomes opposite to the light, and then increases in that direction."[1]

There is no ripeness which is not, so to speak, something ultimate in itself, and not merely a perfected means to a higher end. In order to be ripe it must serve a transcendent use. The ripeness of a leaf, being perfected, leaves the tree at that point and never returns to it. It has nothing to do with any other fruit which the tree may bear, and only genius can pluck it. The fruit of a tree is neither in the seed nor in the full-grown tree, but it is simply the highest use to which it can be put.

March 8, 1840. The wind shifts from northeast and east to northwest and south, and every icicle which has tinkled in the meadow grass so long trickles down its stem and seeks its water level, unerringly, with a million comrades. In the ponds the ice cracks with a busy and inspiriting din, and down the larger streams is

[1] Carpenter's *Vegetable Physiology*, p. 174.

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whirled, grating hoarsely and crashing its way along, which was so lately a firm field for the woodman's team and the fox, sometimes with the tracks of the skaters still fresh upon it, and the holes cut for pickerel. Town committees inspect the bridges and causeways as if by mere eye-force to intercede with the ice and save the treasury. In the brooks the floating of small cakes of ice with various speed is full of content and promise, and when the water gurgles under a natural bridge you may hear these hasty rafts hold conversation in an undertone. Every rill is a channel for the juices of the meadow. Last year's grasses and flower stalks have been steeped in rain and snow, and now the brooks flow with meadow tea, thoroughwort, mint, flagroot, and pennyroyal, all at one draught. In the ponds the sun makes encroachments around the edges first, as ice melts in a kettle on the fire, darting his rays through this crevice, and preparing the deep water to act simultaneously on the under side.

March 8, 1842. Most lecturers preface their discourses on music with a history of music, but as well introduce an essay on virtue with a history of virtue. As if the possible combinations of sound, the last wind that sighed or melody that waked the wood, had any history other than a perceptive ear might hear in the least

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and latest sound of nature. A history of music would be like the history of the future, for so little past is it and capable of record that it is but the hint of a prophecy. It is the history of gravitation. It has no history more than God. It circulates and resounds forever, and only flows like the sea or air. . . . Why, if I should sit down to write its story, the west wind would rise to refute me. Properly speaking there can be no history but natural history, for there is no past in the soul, but in nature. . . . I might as well write the history of my aspirations. Does not the last and highest contain them all? Do the lives of the great composers contain the facts which interested them? What is this music? Why, thinner and more evanescent than ether; subtler than sound, for it is only a disposition of sound. It is to sound what color is to matter. It is the color of a flame, or of the rainbow, or of water. Only one sense has known it. The least profitable, the least tangible fact, which cannot be bought or cultivated but by virtuous methods, and yet our ears ring with it like shells left on the shore.

March 8, 1853. 10 A. M. Rode to Saxonville with F. Browne to look at a small place for sale, *via* Wayland. Return by Sudbury. On wheels in snow. A spring sheen on the

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snow. The melting snow running and sparkling down hill in the ruts was quite spring-like. . . . Saw a mink run across the road in Sudbury, a large, black weasel, to appearance, worming its supple way over the snow. Where it ran, its tracks were thus, = = = = the intervals between the fore and hind feet sixteen or eighteen inches, and between the two fore and the two hind feet two inches and a half.

The distant view of the open-flooded Sudbury meadows all dark blue, surrounded by a landscape of white snow, gave an impulse to the dormant sap in my veins. Dark blue and angry waves contrasting with the white but melting winter landscape. Ponds, of course, do not yet afford this water prospect, only the flooded meadows. There is no ice over or near the stream, and the flood has covered or broken up much of the ice on the meadow. The aspect of these waters at sunset, when the air is still, begins to be unspeakably soothing and promising. Waters are at length and begin to reflect, and instead of looking into the sky, I look into the placid reflecting water for the signs and promise of the morrow. These meadows are the most of ocean that I have fairly learned. Now, when the sap of the trees is probably beginning to flow, the sap of the earth, the river, over-

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flows and bursts its icy fetters. This is the sap of which I make my sugar after the frosty nights, boiling it down and crystallizing it. I must be on the lookout now for gulls and the ducks. That dark blue meadowy revelation. It is as when the sap of the maple bursts forth early and runs down the trunk to the snow. Saw two or three hawks sailing. . . . Saw some very large willow buds expanded (their silk) to thrice the length of their scales, indistinctly barred or waved with darker lines around them. They look more like, are more of spring than anything else I have seen. Heard the spring note of the chickadee now before any spring bird has arrived.

March 8, 1854. What pretty wreaths the mountain cranberry makes, curving upward at the extremity. The leaves are now a dark red, and wreath and all are of such a shape as might fitly be copied in wood or stone or architectural foliage.

March 8, 1855. As the ice melts in the swamps I see the horn-shaped buds of the skunk-cabbage, green with a bluish bloom, standing uninjured, ready to feel the influence of the sun, more prepared for spring, to look at, than any other plant.

March 8, 1857. When I cut a white pine twig, the crystalline sap at once exudes. How

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long has it been thus? Got a glimpse of a hawk, the first of the season. The tree-sparrows sing a little on the still, sheltered, and sunny side of the hill, but not elsewhere. A partridge goes from amid the pitch pines. It lifts each wing so high above its back and flaps so low and withal so rapidly that it presents the appearance of a broad wheel, almost a revolving sphere, as it whirs off, like a cannon ball shot from a gun.

March 8, 1859. P. M. To Hill in rain. . . . There is a fine freezing rain with strong wind from the north, so I keep along under the shelter of hills and woods, along the south side, in my India-rubber coat and boots. Under the southern edge of Woodis Park, in the low ground I see many radical leaves of the *Solidago altissima* and another, I am pretty sure it is the *Solidago stricta*, and occasionally, also, of the *Aster undulatus*, and all are more or less lake beneath. The first, at least, have when bruised a strong scent. Some of them have recently grown decidedly. So at least several kinds of golden-rods and asters have radical leaves lake-colored at this season. The common strawberry leaves, too, are quite fresh, and a handsome lake color beneath in many cases. There are also many little rosettes of the radical leaves of the *Epilobium coloratum*,

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half brown and withered, with bright green centres, at least. . . . There is but a narrow strip of bare ground reaching a few rods into the wood along the edge, but the less ground there is bare, the more we make of it. Such a day as this I resort where the partridges, etc., do, to the bare ground and the sheltered sides of woods and hills, and there explore the moist ground for the radical leaves of plants while the storm lowers overhead, and I forget how the time is passing. If the weather is thick and stormy enough, if there is a good chance to be cold and wet and uncomfortable, in other words to feel weather-beaten, you may consume the afternoon to advantage, thus browsing along the edge of some near wood which would scarcely detain you at all in fair weather, and you will get as far away there as at the end of your longest fair-weather walk, and come home as if from an adventure. There is no better fence to put between you and the village than a storm into which the villagers do not venture out. I go looking for green radical leaves. What a dim and shadowy existence have now to our memories the fair flowers whose localities they mark! How hard to find any trace of their stem now, after it has been flattened under the snows of the winter. I go feeling with wet and freezing fingers amid the withered grass and the

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snow for their prostrate stems, that I may reconstruct the plant. But greenness so absorbs my attention that sometimes I do not see the former rising from the midst of those radical leaves when it almost puts my eyes out. The radical leaves of the shepherd's purse are particularly bright. . . . Men of science, when they pause to contemplate the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, or as they sometimes call Him "the Almighty Designer," speak of Him as a total stranger whom it is necessary to treat with the highest consideration. They seem suddenly to have lost their wits.

March 8, 1860. To Cliffs and Walden. See a small flock of grackles on the willow row above railroad bridge. How they sit and make a business of chattering, for it cannot be called singing, and there is no improvement from age to age, perhaps. Yet as nature is a becoming, these notes may become melodious at last. At length, on my very near approach, they flit suspiciously away, uttering a few subdued notes as they hurry off. This is the first flock of blackbirds I have chanced to see, though C. saw one the 6th.

To say nothing of fungi, lichens, mosses, and other cryptogamous plants, you cannot say that vegetation absolutely ceases at any season in this latitude. For there is grass in some warm

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exposures and in springy places always growing more or less, and willow catkins expanding and peeping out a little farther every warm day from the very beginning of winter, and the skunk-cabbage buds being developed and actually flowering sometimes in the winter, and the sap flowing in the maples on some days in mid-winter, and perhaps some cress growing a little (?), certainly some pads, and various naturalized garden weeds steadily growing, if not blooming, and apple buds sometimes expanding. Thus much of vegetable life, or motion, or growth, is to be detected every winter. There is something of spring in all seasons. There is a large class which is evergreen in its radical leaves, which make such a show as soon as the snow goes off that many take them to be a new growth of the spring. In a pool I notice that the crowfoot (buttercup) leaves which are at the bottom of the water stand up and are much more advanced than those two feet off in the air, for there they receive warmth from the sun, while they are sheltered from cold winds. Nowadays we separate the warmth of the sun from the cold of the wind, and observe that the cold does not pervade all places, but being due to strong northwest winds, if we get into some sunny and sheltered nook where they do not penetrate, we quite forget how cold it is else-

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where. . . . I meet some Indians just camped on Brister's Hill. As usual, they are chiefly concerned to find where black ash grows for their baskets. This is what they set about to ascertain as soon as they arrive in any strange neighborhood.

March 9, 1852. A warm spring rain in the night. 3 P. M. Down the railroad. Cloudy, but spring-like. When the frost comes out of the ground there is a corresponding thawing of the man. The earth is now half bare. These March winds, which make the woods roar and fill the world with life and bustle, appear to wake up the trees out of their winter sleep and excite the sap to flow. I have no doubt they serve some such use, as well as to hasten the evaporation of the snow and water. The railroad men have now their hands full. I hear and see bluebirds come with the warm wind. The sand is flowing in the deep cut. I am affected by the sight of the moist red sand or subsoil under the edge of the sandy bank under the pitch pines. The railroad is perhaps our pleasantest and wildest road. It only makes deep cuts into and through the hills. On it are no houses nor foot-travelers. The travel on it does not disturb me. The woods are left to hang over it. Though straight, it is wild in its accompaniments, keeping all its raw edges.

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Even the laborers on it are not like other laborers. Its houses, if any, are shanties, and its ruins the ruins of shanties, shells where the race that built the railroad dwelt; and the bones they gnawed lie about. I am cheered by the sound of running water now down the wooden troughs each side the cut. This road breaks the surface of the earth. Here is the dryest walking in wet weather, and the easiest in snowy. Even the sight of smoke from the shanty excites me to-day. Already these puddles on the railroad, reflecting the pine woods, remind me of summer lakes.

When I hear the telegraph harp I think I must read the Greek poets. This sound is like a brighter color, red, or blue, or green, where all was dull white or black. It prophesies finer senses, a finer life, a golden age. It is the poetry of the railroad. The heroic and poetic thoughts which the Irish laborers had at their toil have now got expression, that which has made the world mad so long. Or is it the gods expressing their delight at this invention? The flowing sand bursts out through the snow and overflows it where no sand was to be seen. . . . Again it rains, and I turn about. The sounds of water falling on rocks and of air falling on trees are very much alike. Though cloudy, the air excites me. Yesterday all was tight as a

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stricture on my breast. To-day all is loosened. It is a different element from what it was. The sides of the bushy hill where the snow is melted look through this air as if I were under the influence of some intoxicating liquor. The earth is not quite steady nor palpable to my sense, — a little idealized.

March 9, 1853. Minott thinks, and quotes some old worthy as authority for saying, that the bark of the striped squirrel is one of the first sure signs of decided spring weather.

March 9, 1854. Saw this morning a musk-rat sitting "in a round form on the ice," or rather motionless, like the top of a stake or a mass of muck on the edge of the ice. He then dived for a clam, whose shells he left on the ice beside him.

Boiled a handful of rock tripe (*Umbilicaria Muhlenbergii*) (which Tuckerman says "was the favorite rock tripe in Franklin's journey") for more than an hour. It produced a black puff, looking somewhat like boiled tea-leaves, and was insipid, like rice or starch. The dark water in which it was boiled had a bitter taste, and was slightly gelatinous. The puff was not positively disagreeable to the palate.

P. M. To Great Meadows. Saw several flocks of large grayish and whitish or speckled ducks, I suppose the same that P. calls shel-

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drakes. They, like ducks, commonly incline to fly in a line about an equal distance apart. I hear the common sort of quacking from them. It is pleasant to see them at a distance alight on the water with a slanting flight, launch themselves, and sail along so stately. The pieces of ice, large and small, drifting along, help to conceal them. In the spaces of still, open water I see the reflection of the hills and woods, which for so long I have not seen, and it gives expression to the face of nature. The face of nature is lit up by these reflections in still water in the spring. Sometimes you see only the top of a distant hill reflected far within the meadow, where a dull, gray field of ice intervenes between the water and the shore.

March 9, 1855. P. M. To Andromeda Ponds. Scare up a rabbit on the hillside by these ponds which was gnawing a smooth sumach. See also where they have gnawed the red maple, sweet fern, *Populus grandidentata*, white and other oaks (taking off considerable twigs at four or five cuts), amelanchier, and sallow. But they seem to prefer the smooth sumach to any of them. With this variety of cheap diet they are not likely to starve. The rabbit, indeed, lives, but the sumach may be killed. I get a few drops of the sweet red-

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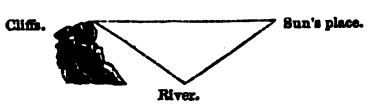
maple juice which has run down the main stem where a rabbit has nibbled a twig off close.

The heartwood of the poison dogwood, when I break it down with my hand, has a singular, decayed-yellow look, and a spirituous or apothecary odor.

As the other day I clambered over those great white pine masts which lay in all directions, one upon another, on the hillside south of Fair Haven, where the woods have been laid waste, I was struck, in favorable lights, with the jewel-like brilliancy of the sawed ends thickly bedewed with crystal drops of turpentine, thickly as a shield, as if the Dryads, Oreads, pine-wood nymphs had seasonably wept there the fall of the tree. The perfect sincerity of these terebinthine drops, each one reflecting the world, colorless as light, or like drops of dew heaven-distilled and trembling to their fall, is incredible when you remember how firm their consistency. And is this that *pitch*, which you cannot touch without being defiled?

Looking from the cliffs, the sun being, as



before, invisible, I saw far more light in the reflected sky in the neighborhood of the sun

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than I could see in the heavens from my position, and it occurred to me that the reason was that there was reflected to me from the river the view I should have got if I had stood there on the water in a more favorable position. I see that the sand in the road has crystallized as if dried (for it is nearly cold enough to freeze), like the first crystals that shoot and set on water when freezing. . . . C. says he saw yesterday the slate-colored hawk, with a white bar across tail, meadow hawk, *i. e.*, frog hawk. Probably it finds moles and mice.

March 9, 1859. . . . At Corner Spring Brook the water reaches up to the crossing, and *stands* over the ice there, the brook being open and some space each side of it. When I look from forty to fifty rods off at the yellowish water covering the ice about a foot here, it is decidedly purple (though, when I am close by and looking down on it, it is yellowish merely), while the water of the brook and channel, and a rod on each side of it, where there is no ice beneath, is a beautiful very dark blue. These colors are very distinct, the line of separation being the edge of the ice on the bottom; and this apparent juxtaposition of different kinds of water is a very singular and pleasing sight. You see a light purple flood about the color of a red grape, and a broad channel of dark pur-

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ple water, as dark as a common blue-purple grape, sharply distinct across its middle.

March 10, 1852. I was reminded this morning, before I rose, of those undescribed ambrosial mornings of summer which I can remember, when a thousand birds were heard gently twittering and ushering in the light, like the argument to a new canto of an epic, a heroic poem. The serenity, the infinite promise of such a morning! The song or twitter of birds drips from the leaves like dew. Then there was something divine and immortal in our life, when I have waked up on my couch in the woods and seen the day dawning and heard the twittering of the birds.

I see flocks of a dozen bluebirds together. The warble of this bird is innocent and celestial like its color. Saw a sparrow, perhaps a song-sparrow, flitting amid the young oaks where the ground was covered with snow. I think that this is an indication that the ground is quite bare a little further south. Probably the spring birds never fly far over a snow-clad country.

I see the reticulated leaves of the rattlesnake plantain in the woods quite fresh and green. What is the little chickweed-like plant already springing up on the top of the cliffs? There are some other plants with bright green leaves

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which have either started somewhat or have never suffered from the cold under the snow.

I am pretty sure that I heard the chuckle of a ground squirrel among the warm and bare rocks of the cliffs. . . . The mosses are now very handsome, like young grass pushing up. Heard the phebe note of the chickadee to-day for the first time; I had at first heard their *day*, *day*, *day*, ungratefully. "Ah! you but carry my thoughts back to winter!" But anon I found that they, too, had become spring birds. They had changed their note. Even they feel the influence of spring.

I see cup lichens (cladonias) with their cups beset inside and out with little leaflets like shell work.

March 10, 1853. This is the first really spring day. The sun is brightly reflected from all surfaces, and the north side of the street begins to be a little more passable to foot-travelers. You do not think it necessary to button up your coat.

P. M. To Second Division Brook. As I stand looking over the river, looking from the bridge into the flowing, eddying tide, the almost strange chocolate-colored water, the sound of distant crows and cocks is full of spring. As Anacreon says "the works of men shine," so the sounds of men and birds are musical.

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Something analogous to the thawing of the ice seems to have taken place in the air. At the end of winter there is a season in which we are daily expecting spring, and finally, a day when it arrives. . . . The radical leaves of innumerable plants (as here a dock in and near the water) are evidently affected by the spring influences. Many plants are to some extent evergreen, like the buttercup now beginning to start. Methinks the first obvious evidence of spring is the pushing out of the swamp-willow catkins, the pushing up of skunk-cabbage spathes, and pads at the bottom of water. This is the order I am inclined to, though perhaps any of these may take precedence of all the rest in any particular case. What is that dark pickle-green alga (?) at the bottom of this ditch, looking *somewhat* like a decaying cress, with fruit like a lichen?

At Nut Meadow Brook Crossing we rest awhile on the rail, gazing into the eddying stream. The ripple marks on the sandy bottom where silver spangles shine in the sun, with black wrecks of caddis casts lodged under each, the shadows of the invisible dimples reflecting prismatic colors on the bottom, the minnows already stemming the current with restless, wiggling tails, ever and anon darting aside, probably to secure some invisible mote in the

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water, whose shadows we do not at first detect on the sandy bottom, though, when detected, they are so much more obvious as well as larger and more interesting than the substance, in which each fin is distinctly seen, though scarcely to be detected in the substance, these are all very beautiful and exhilarating sights, a sort of diet drink to heal our winter discontent. Have the minnows played thus all winter? The equisetum at the bottom has freshly grown several inches. Then should I not have given the precedence on the other page to this and some other water plants? I suspect that I should, and the flags appear to be starting. I am surprised to find on the rail a young tortoise $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches long in the shell, which has crawled out to sun or perchance is on its way to the water. I think it must be the *Emys guttata*, for there is a large and distinct yellow spot on each dorsal and lateral plate, and the third dorsal plate is hexagonal and not quadrangular, as that of the *Emys picta* is described as being, though in my specimen I can't make it out to be so. Yet the edges of the plates are prominent as described in the *Emys sculptâ*, which, but for the spots, two yellow spots on each side of the hind head, and one fainter on the top of the head, I should take it to be. It is about seven eighths of an inch wide, very inactive. When was it hatched and where?

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What is the theory of these sudden pitches of deep shelving places in the sandy bottom of the brook? It is very interesting to walk along such a brook as this in the midst of the meadow, which you can better do now before the frost is quite out of the sod, and gaze into the deep holes in its irregular bottom and the dark gulfs under the banks. Where it rushes over the edge of a steep slope in the bottom, the shadow of the disturbed surface is like sand hurried forward in the water. The bottom being of shifting sand is exceedingly irregular and interesting.

What was that sound that came on the softened air? It was the warble of the first bluebird from that scraggy apple orchard yonder. When this is heard then has spring arrived.

It must be that the willow twigs, both the yellow and green, are brighter colored than before; I cannot be deceived. They shine as if the sap were already flowing under the bark, a certain lively and glossy hue they have. The early poplars are pushing forward their catkins, though they make not so much display as the willows. Still, in some parts of the woods it is good sledding. At Second Division Brook, the fragrance of the senecio, decidedly evergreen, which I have bruised, is very permanent. It is a memorable, sweet, meadow fragrance. I find

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a yellow-spotted tortoise, *Emys guttata*, in the bank. A very few leaves of cowslips, and those wholly under water, show themselves yet. The leaves of the water saxifrage, for the most part frost-bitten, are common enough. . . .

Minott says that old Sam Nutting, the hunter, Fox Nutting, old Fox he was called, who died more than forty years ago (he lived in Jacob Baker's home in Lincoln, came from Weston, and was some seventy years old when he died), told him that he had killed not only bears about Fair Haven among the walnuts, but *moose*.

March 10, 1854. Misty rain, rain. The third day of more or less rain.

P. M. C. Miles road *via* Clam-shell Hill. . . . It occurs to me that heavy rains and sudden meltings of the snow, such as we had a fortnight ago (February 26th), before the ground is thawed, so that all the water, instead of being soaked up by the ground, flows rapidly into the streams and ponds, are necessary to swell and break them up. If we waited for the direct influence of the sun on the ice, and the influence of such water as would reach the river under other circumstances, the spring would be very much delayed. In the violent freshet there is a mechanic force added to the chemic. . . .

Saw a skunk in the corner road, which I followed sixty rods or more. Out now, about 4

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P. M., partly because it is a dark, foul day. It is a slender, black (and white) animal, with its back remarkably arched, standing high behind, and carrying its head low; it runs, even when undisturbed, with a singular teter or undulation, like the walking of a Chinese lady. Very slow; I hardly have to run to keep up with it. It has a long tail which it regularly erects when I come too near, and prepares to discharge its liquid. It is white at the end of the tail, on the hind head, and in a line on the front of the face. The rest black, except the flesh-colored nose (and, I think, feet). . . . It tried repeatedly to get into the wall, and did not show much cunning. Finally, it steered for an old skunk or woodchuck hole under a wall four rods off and got into it, or under the wall, at least, for the hole was stopped up. There I could view it closely and at leisure. It has a remarkably long, narrow, pointed head and snout which enable it to make those deep narrow holes in the earth by which it probes for insects. Its eyes are bluish-black, and have an innocent, child-like expression. It made a singular loud patting sound repeatedly on the frozen ground under the wall, undoubtedly with its fore feet. (I saw only the upper part of the animal.) . . . Probably it has to do with getting its food, patting the earth to get the insects or worms,

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though why it did so then, I know not. Its track was small and round, showing the nails, a little less than an inch in diameter. Its steps alternate, five or six inches by two or two and a half, sometimes two feet together. There is something pathetic in such a sight, next to seeing one of the human aborigines of the country. I respect the skunk as a human being in a very humble sphere. I have no doubt they have begun to probe already where the ground permits, or as far as it does. But what have they eat all winter?

The weather is almost April-like. We always have much of this rainy, drizzling weather in early spring, after which we expect to hear geese.

March 10, 1855. I am not aware of growth in any plant yet, unless it be the further peeping out of the willow catkins. They have crept out further from under the scales, and looking closely I detect a little redness along the twigs even now.

You are always surprised by the sight of the first spring bird or insect. They seem premature, and there is no such evidence of spring as themselves, so that they literally fetch the year about. It is thus when I hear the first robin or bluebird, or looking along the brooks see the first water-bugs out, circling. But you

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think they have come and nature cannot recede. Thus, when, on the 6th, I saw the gyrinus at Second Division Brook. I saw no peculiarity in the water or the air to remind me of them, but to-day they are here and yesterday they were not. I go looking deeper for tortoises, when suddenly my eye rests on these black circling apple-seeds in some smoother bay.

The red squirrel should be drawn with a pine cone. . . .

Jacob Farmer gave me to-day a part of the foot, probably of a pine marten, which he found two or three days ago in a trap he had set in his brook under water for a mink, baited with a pickerel. It is colored above with glossy dark brown hair, and contains but two toes, armed with fine and very sharp talons, much curved. There may be a third without the talon. It had left thus much in the trap and departed.

March 10, 1859. There are some who never do nor say anything, whose life merely excites expectation. Their excellence reaches no further than a gesture or mode of carrying themselves. They are a sash dangling from the waist, or a sculptured war-club over the shoulder. They are like fine-edged tools gradually becoming rusty in a shop window. I like as well, if not better, to see a piece of iron or steel, out of

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which many such tools will be made, or the bushwhack in a man's hand.

When I meet gentlemen and ladies I am reminded of the extent of the habitable and uninhabitable globe. I exclaim to myself: Surfaces! surfaces! If the outside of a man is so variegated and extensive, what must the inside be? You are high up the Platte River, traversing deserts, plains covered with soda, with no deeper hollow than a prairie-dog hole, tenanted also by owls and venomous snakes.

As I look toward the woods from Wood's Bridge, I perceive the spring in the softened air. This is to me the most interesting and affecting phenomenon of the season as yet. Apparently, in consequence of the very warm sun, this still and clear day, falling on the earth four fifths covered with snow and ice, there is an almost invisible vapor held in suspension, which is like a thin coat or enamel applied to every object, and especially it gives to the woods of pine and oak, intermingled, a softened and more living appearance. They evidently stand in a more genial atmosphere than before. Looking more low I see that shimmering in the air over the earth which betrays the evaporation going on. Looking through this transparent vapor, all surfaces, not osiers and open water alone, look more vivid. The hardness of winter is relaxed.

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There is a fine effluence surrounding the wood, as if the sap had begun to stir, and you could detect it a mile off. Such is the difference in an object seen through a warm, moist, and soft air, and a cold, dry, hard one. Such is the genialness of nature that the trees appear to have put out feelers, by which the senses apprehend them more tenderly. I do not know that the woods are ever more beautiful or affect me more.

I feel it to be a greater success as a lecturer to affect uncultivated natures than to affect the most refined, for all cultivation is necessarily superficial, and its root may not even be *directed toward* the centre of the being. . . .

Look up or down the open river channel now so smooth. Like a hibernating animal, it has ventured to come out to the mouth of its burrow. One way, perhaps, it is like melted silver alloyed with copper. It goes nibbling off the edge of the thick ice on each side. Here and there I see a musquash sitting in the sun on the edge of the ice, eating a clam, and the shells it has left are strewn along the edge. Ever and anon he drops into the liquid mirror and soon reappears with another clam.

This clear, placid, silvery water is evidently a phenomenon of spring. Winter could not show us this. . . . As we sit in this wonderful

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air, many sounds — that of woodchopping for one — come to our ears, agreeably blunted, or muffled even, like the drumming of a partridge, not sharp and rending as in winter and recently. If a partridge should drum in winter, probably it would not reverberate so softly through the wood, and sound indefinitely far. Our voices even sound differently, and betray the spring. We speak as in a house, in a warm apartment still, with relaxed muscles and softened voices. The voice, like a woodchuck in his burrow, is met and lapped in and encouraged by all genial and sunny influences. There may be heard now, perhaps, under south hillsides and the south sides of houses, a slight murmur of conversation, as of insects, out of doors.

These earliest spring days are peculiarly pleasant; we shall have no more of them for a year. I am apt to forget that we may have raw and blustering days a month hence. The combination of this delicious air, which you do not want to be warmer or softer, with the presence of ice and snow, you sitting on the bare russet portions, the south hillsides of the earth, — this is the charm of these days. It is the summer beginning to show itself, like an old friend, in the midst of winter. You ramble from one drier russet patch to another. These are your stages. You have the air and sun of summer

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over snow and ice, and in some places even the rustling of dry leaves under your feet, as in Indian-summer days.

The bluebird on the apple-tree, warbling so innocently, to inquire if any of its mates are within call, — the angel of the spring! Fair and innocent, yet the offspring of the earth. The color of the sky, *above*, and of the subsoil, *beneath*, suggesting what sweet and innocent melody, terrestrial melody, may have its birthplace between the sky and the ground.

March 11, 1842. We can only live healthily the life the gods assign us. I must receive my life as passively as the willow leaf that flutters over the brook. I must not be for myself, but God's work, and that is always good. I will wait the breezes patiently, and grow as they shall determine. My fate cannot but be grand so. We may live the life of a plant or an animal without living an animal life. This constant and universal content of the animal comes of resting quietly in God's palm. I feel as if I could at any time resign my life and the responsibility into God's hands, and become as innocent and free from care as a plant or stone.

My life! my life! why will you linger? Are the years short and the months of no account? . . . Can God afford that I should forget him? Is he so indifferent to my career? Can heaven

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be postponed with no more ado? Why were my ears given to hear those everlasting strains which haunt my life, and yet to be profaned by these perpetual dull sounds? . . . Why, God, did you include me in your great scheme? Will you not make me a partner at last? Did it need there should be a conscious material?

My friend! my friend! I 'd speak so frank to thee that thou wouldst pray me to keep back some part of it, for fear I robbed myself. To address thee delights me, there is such clearness in the delivery. I am delivered of my tale, which, told to strangers, still would linger in my life as if untold, or doubtful how it ran.

March 11, 1854. Fair weather after three rainy days. Air full of birds, — bluebirds, song-sparrows, chickadees (phebe-notes), and blackbirds. Song-sparrows toward the water with at least two kinds or variations of their strain hard to imitate, — *ozit, ozit, ozit, psa te te te tete ter twe ter*, is one. The other began *chip, chip che we*, etc., etc.

Bluebirds' warbling curls in elms.

Shall the earth be regarded as a graveyard, a necropolis merely, and not also as a granary filled with the seeds of life, fertile compost, not exhausted sand? Is not its fertility increased by decay?

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On Tuesday, the 7th, I heard the first song-sparrow chirp, and saw it flit silently from alder to alder. This pleasant morning, after three days' rain and mist, they generally burst forth into sprayey song from the low trees along the river. The development of their song is gradual, but sure, like the expanding of a flower. This is the first *song* I have heard.

P. M. To Cliffs. River higher than at any time in the winter, I think. . . . Muskrats are driven out of their holes. Heard one's loud plash behind Hubbard's. It comes up brown, striped with wet. I could detect its progress beneath, in shallow water, by the bubbles which came up. . . . From the hill, the river and meadow are about equally water and ice, — rich, blue water, and islands or continents of white ice, no longer ice in place. The distant mountains are all white with snow, while our landscape is nearly bare.

Another year I must observe the alder and willow sap as early as the middle of February at least. . . . Nowadays, where snow-banks have partly melted against the banks by the roadside in low ground, I see in the grass numerous galleries where the mice or moles have worked in the winter.

March 11, 1855. At this season, before grass springs to conceal them, I notice those

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pretty little roundish shells on the tops of hills; one to-day on Anursnack.

I see pitch pine needles looking as if white-washed, thickly covered on each of the two slopes of the needle with narrow white oyster-shell-like latebræ or chrysalids of insects.

March 11, 1856. When it is proposed to me to go abroad, rub off some rust, and *better my condition* in a worldly sense, I fear lest my life would lose some of its homeliness. If these fields, and streams, and woods, the phenomena of nature here, and the simple occupations of the inhabitants should cease to interest and inspire me, no culture or wealth would atone for the loss. I fear the dissipation that traveling, going into society, even the best, the enjoyment of intellectual luxuries, imply. If Paris is much in your mind, if it is more and more to you, Concord is less and less, and yet it would be a wretched bargain to accept the proudest Paris in exchange for my native village. At best, Paris could only be a school in which to learn to live here, a stepping-stone to Concord, a school in which to fit for this university. I wish so to live ever as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, every-day phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive in my daily walk, the conversations of my neighbors, may inspire me,

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and I may dream of no heaven but that which lies about me. A man may acquire a taste for wine or brandy, and so lose his love for water, but should we not pity him? The sight of a marsh hawk in Concord meadows is worth more to me than the entry of the allies into Paris. In this sense I am not ambitious. I do not wish my native soil to become exhausted and run out through neglect. Only that traveling is good which reveals to me the value of home and enables me to enjoy it better. That man is the richest whose pleasures are the cheapest.

It is strange that men are in such haste to get fame as teachers rather than knowledge as learners.

March 11, 1857. I see and talk with Rice sawing off the ends of clapboards, which he has planed to make them square, for an addition to his house. He has a fire in his shop and plays at house-building there. His life is poetic. He does the work himself. He combines several qualities and talents rarely combined. Though he owns houses in the city whose repairs he attends to, finds tenants for them, and collects the rent, he also has his Sudbury farm and beanfield. Though he lived in a city, he would still be natural, and related to primitive nature around him. Though he owned all Beacon Street, you might find that his mittens were

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made of the skin of a woodchuck that had ravaged his beanfield. I noticed a woodchuck's skin tacked up to the inside of his shop. He said it had fatted on his beans and William had killed it, and expected to get another to make a pair of mittens of, one not being quite large enough. It was excellent for mittens; you could hardly wear it out. Spoke of the cuckoo, which was afraid of other birds, was easily beaten, would dive into the middle of a poplar, then come out on to some bare twig and look round for a nest to rob of young or eggs.

March 11, 1859. Mrs. A. takes on dolefully on account of the solitude in which she lives; but she gets little consolation. Mrs. B. says she envies her that retirement. Mrs. A. is aware that she does, and says it is as if a thirsty man should envy another the river in which he is drowning. So goes the world, it is either this extreme or that. Of solitude, one gets too much; another, not enough.

March 11, 1860. I see a woodchuck out on the calm side of Lee's Hill (Nawshawtuck). He has pushed away the withered leaves which filled his hole, and come forth, and left his tracks on those slight patches of the recent snow which are left about his hole.

I was amused with the behavior of two red squirrels, as I approached the hemlocks. They

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were as gray as red, and white beneath. I at first heard a faint, sharp chirp, like a bird, within the hemlock, on my account, and then one rushed forward on a descending limb toward me, barking or chirruping at me after his fashion, within a rod. They seemed to vie with one another who should be most bold. For four or five minutes at least they kept up an incessant chirruping or squeaking bark, vibrating their tails and their whole bodies, and frequently changing their position or point of view, making a show of rushing forward, or perhaps darting off a few feet like lightning, and barking still more loudly, *i. e.*, with a yet sharper exclamation, as if frightened by their own motions, their whole bodies quivering, their heads and great eyes on the *qui vive*. You are uncertain whether it is not partly in sport, after all.

March 11, 1861. The seed of the willow is exceedingly minute, as I measure, from one twentieth to one twelfth of an inch in length and one fourth as much in width. It is surrounded at base by a tuft of cotton-like hairs, about one quarter of an inch long, rising around and above it, forming a kind of parachute. These render it more buoyant than the seeds of any other of our trees, and it is borne the furthest horizontally with the least wind. It falls very slowly even in the still air of a chamber,

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and rapidly ascends over a stove. It floats more like a mote than the seed of any other of our trees, in a meandering manner, and, being enveloped in this tuft of cotton, the seed is hard to detect. Each of the numerous little pods, more or less ovate and beaked, which form the fertile catkin, is closely packed with down and seeds. At maturity these pods open their beaks, which curve back, and gradually discharge their burden, like the milk-weed. It would take a delicate gin indeed to separate these seeds from their cotton.

If you lay bare any spot in our woods, however sandy, as by a railroad cut, no shrub or tree is surer to plant itself there, sooner or later, than a willow (*Salix humilis*, commonly) or a poplar. We have many kinds, but each is confined to its own habitat. I am not aware that the *Salix nigra* has ever strayed from the river's bank. Though many of the *Salix alba* have been set along our causeways, very few have sprung up and maintained their ground elsewhere.

The principal habitat of most of our species, such as love the water, is the river's bank and the adjacent river meadows, and when certain kinds spring up in an inland meadow where they were not known before, I feel pretty certain that they come from the river meadows. I

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have but little doubt that the seed of four of them that grow along the railroad causeway was blown from the river meadows, namely, *Salix pedicellaris*, *lucida*, *Torreyana*, and *petiolaris*.

The barren and fertile flowers are usually on separate plants. The greater part of the white willows set out on our causeways are sterile only. You can easily distinguish the fertile ones at a distance when the pods are bursting. It is said that no sterile weeping willows have been introduced into this country, so that it cannot be raised from the seed. Of two of the indigenous willows common along the bank of our river I have detected but one sex.

The seeds of the willow thus annually fill the air with their lint, being wafted to all parts of the country, and though apparently not more than one in many millions gets to be a shrub, yet so lavish and persevering is Nature that her purpose is completely answered.

March 12, 1842. Consider what a difference there is between living and dying. To die is not to *begin* to die and *continue*, it is not a state of continuance, but of transientness; whereas to live is a condition of continuance, and does not mean to be born merely. There is no continuance of death. It is a transient phenomenon. Nature presents nothing in a state of death.

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March 12, 1852. According to Linnæus very many plants become perennial and *arborescent* in warm regions, which with us are annual, for duration often depends more on the locality than on the plant. So is it with men. Under more favorable conditions, the human plant that is short-lived and dwarfed becomes perennial and *arborescent*.

I have learned in a shorter time and more accurately the meaning of the scientific terms used in botany from a few plates of figures at the end of the "Philosophia Botanica," with the names annexed, than a volume of explanations or glossaries could teach. And, that the alternate pages may not be left blank, Linnæus has given on them very concise and important instruction to students of botany. This lawgiver of science, this systematizer, this methodizer, carries his system into his studies in the field. On one of the little pages he gives some instruction concerning "herbatio" or botanizing. Into this he introduces law, order, and system, and describes with the greatest economy of words what some would have required a small volume to tell, all on a small page; tells what dress you shall wear, what instruments you shall carry, what season and hours you shall observe, namely, "from the leafing of the trees, Sirius excepted, to the fall of the leaf, twice a

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week in summer, once, in spring; from seven in the morning till seven at night;" when you shall dine and take your rest, etc., whether you shall botanize in a crowd or dispersed, etc., how far you shall go, two miles and a half, at most; what you shall collect, what kind of observations make, etc., etc.

Railroad to Walden, 3 P. M. I see the *Populus* (apparently *tremuloides*, not *grandidentata*) at the end of the railroad causeway, showing the down of its ament. Bigelow makes the *tremuloides* flower in April, the *grandidentata* in May. . . . The little grain of wheat, triticum, is the noblest food of man, the lesser grains of other grasses are the food of passerine birds at present. Their diet is like man's.

The gods can never afford to leave a man in the world who is privy to any of their secrets. They cannot have a spy here. They will at once send him packing. How can you walk on ground where you see through it?

The telegraph harp has spoken to me more distinctly and effectually than any man ever did.

March 12, 1853. It is essential that a man confine himself to pursuits, a scholar, for instance, to studies which lie next to and conduce to his life, which do not go against the grain either of his will or his imagination. The

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scholar finds in his experience some studies to be most fertile and radiant with light, others, dry, barren, and dark. If he is wise, he will not persevere in the last, as a plant in a cellar will strive towards the light. He will confine the observations of his mind as closely as possible to the experience or life of his senses. His thought must live with and be inspired with the life of the body. The death-bed scenes even of the best and wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life, to subject their whole lives to their will, as he who said he would give a sign, if he were conscious, after his head was cut off, but he gave no sign. Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows. A man may associate with such companions, he may pursue such employments, as will darken the day for him. Men choose darkness rather than light.

P. M. Saw the first lark rise from the railroad causeway and sail on quivering wing over the meadow to alight on a heap of dirt.

Was that a mink we saw at the boiling spring? The senecio was very forward there in the water, and it still scents my fingers. A very lasting odor it leaves. . . . It is a rare lichen day. The usnea with its large fruit is very rich on the maples in the swamp, luxuriat-

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ing in this moist, overcast, melting day, but it is impossible to get it home in good condition.

Looking behind the bark of a dead white pine I find plenty of gnats quite lively and ready to issue forth as soon as the sun comes out. The grubs there are sluggish, buried in the *chankings*. I took off some pieces of bark more than three feet long and one foot wide. Between this and the wood, in the dust left by borers, the gnats were concealed, ready to swarm. This is their hibernaculum.

The rich red-brown leaves of the gnaphalium, downy white beneath, begin to attract me where the snow is off.

March 12, 1854. A. M. Up railroad to woods. We have white frosts these mornings. This is the blackbird morning. Their sprayey notes and conqueree ring with the song-sparrow's jingle all along the river. Thus gradually they acquire confidence to sing. It is a beautiful spring morning. I hear my first robin peep distinctly at a distance on some higher trees, oaks or other, on a high key, no singing yet. I hear from an apple-tree a faint cricket-like chirp, and a sparrow darts away, flying far, *dashing from side to side*. I think it must be the white-in-tail or grass finch. I hear a jay loudly screaming, *phe-phay*, *phe-*

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phay, a loud, shrill chickadee's *phe-bee*. I see and hear the lark sitting with head erect, neck outstretched, in the middle of a pasture, and I hear another far off, singing. They sing when they first come. All these birds do their warbling especially in the still sunny hour after sunrise. Now is the time to be abroad to hear them, as you detect the slightest ripple in smooth water. As with tinkling sounds the sources of streams burst their icy fetters, so the rills of music begin to flow and swell the general choir of spring. Memorable is the warm light of the spring sun on russet fields in the morning.

P. M. To Ball's Hill along river. My companion tempts me to certain licenses of speech, *i. e.*, to reckless and sweeping expressions which I am wont to regret that I have used. I find that I have used more harsh, extravagant, and cynical expressions concerning mankind and individuals than I intended. I find it difficult to make to him a sufficiently moderate statement. I think it is because I have not his sympathy in my sober and constant view. He asks for a paradox, an eccentric statement, and too often I give it to him.

Saw some small ducks, teal or widgeons.

This great expanse of deep blue water, deeper than the sky, why does it not blue my

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soul, as of yore? It is hard to soften me now. . . . The time was when this great blue scene would have tinged my spirit more.

Now is the time to look for Indian relics, the sandy fields being just bared.

I stand on the high lichen-covered and colored (greenish) hill beyond Abner Buttrick's, I go further east and look across the meadows to Bedford, and see that peculiar scenery of March in which I have taken so many rambles; the earth just bare and beginning to be dry, the snow lying on the north sides of hills, the gray, deciduous trees, and the green pines soughing in the March wind. They look now as if deserted by a companion, the snow. When you walk over bare, lichen-clad hills, just beginning to be dry, and look afar over the blue water on the meadows, you are beginning to break up your winter quarters and plan adventures for the new year. The scenery is like, yet unlike, November. You have the same barren russet, but now instead of a dry, hard, cold wind, a peculiarly soft, moist air, or else a raw wind. Now is the reign of water. I see many crows on the water's edge these days. It is astonishing how soon the ice has gone out of the river. But it still lies on the bottom of the meadow.

Is it peculiar to the song-sparrow to dodge behind and hide in walls and the like?

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Toward night the water becomes smooth and beautiful. Men are eager to launch their boats and paddle over the meadows.

March 12, 1856. I never saw such solid mountains of snow in the roads. You travel along for many rods over excellent, dry, solid sleighing where the road is perfectly level, not thinking but you are within a foot of the ground, then suddenly descend four or five feet, and find, to your surprise, that you had been traversing the broad back of a drift.

March 12, 1857. P. M. To Hill. Observe the waxwork twining about the smooth sumach. It winds against the sun. It is at first loose about the stem, but this erelong expands and overgrows it.

Observed the track of a squirrel in the snow under one of the apple-trees on the southeast side of the hill, and looking up saw a red squirrel with a nut or piece of frozen apple (?) in his mouth within six feet, sitting in a constrained position, partly crosswise, on a limb over my head, perfectly still, and looking not at me, but off into the air, evidently expecting to escape my attention by this trick. I stood, and watched and chirruped to him about five minutes, so near, and yet he did not once turn his head to look at me, or move a foot, or wink. The only motion was that of his tail curled over

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his back in the wind. At length he did change his attitude a little and look at me a moment. Evidently this is a trick they often practice. If I had been farther off, he might have scolded at me.

March 12, 1859. P. M. In rain to Ministerial Swamp. . . . As I passed the J—— Hosmer (rough-cast) house, I thought I never saw any bank so handsome as the russet hillside behind it. It is a very barren, exhausted soil where the cladonia lichens abound, and the lower side is a flowing sand, but this russet grass, with its weeds, being saturated with moisture, was, in this light, the richest brown, methought, that I ever saw. There was the pale brown of the grass, red-brown of some weeds (sarothra and pinweed, probably), dark brown of huckleberry and sweet fern stems, and the very visible green of the cladonias, thirty rods off, and the rich brown fringes where the broken sod hung over the sand-bank. . . . On some knolls these vivid and rampant lichens, as it were, dwarf the oaks. A peculiar and unaccountable light seemed to fall on that bank or hillside, though it was thick storm all around. A sort of Newfoundland sun seemed to be shining on it. It was such a light that you looked round for the sun from which it might come. . . . It was a prospect to excite a reindeer.

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These tints of brown were as softly and richly fair and sufficing as the most brilliant autumnal tints. In fair and dry weather these spots may be commonplace. But now they are worthy to tempt the painter's brush. The picture should be the side of a barren, lichen-clad hill with a flowing sand-bank beneath, a few blackish huckleberry bushes scattered about, and bright, white patches of snow here and there in the ravines, the hill running east and west, and seen through the storm from a point twenty or thirty rods south.

March 13, 1841. How alone must our life be lived. We dwell on the seashore, and none between us and the sea. Men are my merry companions, my fellow-pilgrims, who beguile the way, but leave me at the first turn in the road, for none are traveling one road so far as myself. Each one marches in the van. The weakest child is exposed to the fates henceforth as barely as its parents. Parents and relatives but entertain the youth. They cannot stand between him and his destiny. This is the one bare side of every man. There is no fence. It is clear before him to the bounds of space.

What is fame to a living man? If he live aright the sound of no man's voice will resound through the aisles of his secluded life. His life

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is a hallowed silence, a pool. The loudest sounds have to thank my little ear that they are heard.

March 13, 1842. The sad memory of departed friends is soon incrusted over with sublime and pleasing thoughts, as their monuments are overgrown with moss. Nature doth thus kindly heal every wound. By the mediation of a thousand little mosses and fungi the most unsightly objects become radiant with beauty. There seem to be two sides of this world presented to us at different times, as we see things in growth or dissolution, in life or death. For seen with the eye of a poet, as God sees them, all things are alive and beautiful, but seen with the historical eye, or the eye of memory, they are dead and offensive. If we see Nature as pausing, immediately all mortifies and decays; but seen as progressing she is beautiful.

I am startled that God can make me so rich even with my own cheap stores. It needs but a few wisps of straw in the sun, some small word dropped, or that has long lain silent in some book. When heaven begins and the dead arise no trumpet is blown. Perhaps the south wind will blow.

March 13, 1853. 6 A. M. To Cliffs. There begins to be a greater depth of saffron in the morning sky. The morning and evening horizon fires are warmer to the eye.

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March 13, 1855. P. M. To Hubbard's Close. . . . Coming through the stubble of Stow's rye-field in front of the Breed House, I meet with four mice nests in going half a dozen rods. They lie flat on the ground amid the stubble, flattened spheres, the horizontal diameter about five inches, the perpendicular considerably less, composed of grass or finer stubble. On taking them up you do not at once detect the entrance with your eye, but rather feel it with your finger on the side. They are lined with the finest of the grass. These were probably made when the snow was on the ground, for their winter residence while they gleaned the rye-field, and when the snow went off, they scampered to the woods. I think they were made by the *Mus leucopus*, i. e., *Arvida Emmonsii*.

I look at many woodchuck's holes, but as yet they are choked with leaves. There is no sign that their occupants have come abroad.

March 13, 1859. I see a small flock of blackbirds flying over, some rising, others falling, yet all advancing together, one flock, but many birds, some silent, others *tchucking*, — incessant alternation. This harmonious movement, as in a dance, this agreeing to differ, makes the charm of the spectacle to me. One bird looks fractional, naked, like a single thread

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or raveling from the web to which it belongs. Alternation! Alternation! Heaven and Hell! Here again, in the flight of a bird, its ricochet motion is that undulation observed in so many materials, as in the mackerel sky.

If men were to be destroyed, and the books they have written to be transmitted to a new race of creatures, a new world, what kind of record would be found in them of so remarkable a phenomenon as the rainbow?

I cannot easily forget the beauty of those terrestrial browns in the rain yesterday. The withered grass was not of that very pale, hoary brown that it is to-day, now that it is dry and lifeless; but being perfectly saturated and dripping with the rain, the whole hillside seemed to reflect a certain yellowish light, so that you looked round for the sun in the midst of the storm. . . . The cladonias crowning the knoll had richly expanded and erected themselves, though seen twenty rods off, and the knoll appeared swelling and bursting as with yeast. The various hues of brown were most beautifully blended, so that the earth appeared covered with the softest and most harmoniously spotted and tinted fur coat. . . . In short, in these early spring rains, the withered herbage thus saturated, and reflecting its brightest withered tint, seems in a certain degree to have re-

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vived, and sympathizes with the fresh greenish, or yellowish, or brownish lichens in its midst, which also seemed to have withered. It seemed to me, and I think it may be the truth, that the abundant moisture, bringing out the highest color on the brown surface of the earth, generated a certain degree of light, which, when the rain held up a little, reminded you of the sun shining through a thick mist. . . . The barrenest surfaces are perhaps the most interesting in such weather as yesterday, where the most terrene colors are seen. The wet earth and sand, and especially subsoil, are very invigorating sights.

It is remarkable that the spots where I find most arrowheads, etc., being light, dry soil (as the Great Fields, Clam-shell Hill, etc.), are among the first to be bare of snow and free from frost. It is very curiously and particularly true, for the only parts of the northeast section of the Great Fields which are so dry that I do not slump there are those, small in area, where perfectly bare patches of sand occur, and there, singularly enough, the arrowheads are particularly common. Indeed, in some cases, I find them only on such bare spots, a rod or two in extent, where a single wigwam might have stood, and not half a dozen rods off in any direction. Yet the difference of level

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may not be more than a foot, if there is any. It is as if the Indians had selected precisely the driest spots on the whole plain with a view to their advantage at this season. If you were going to pitch a tent to-night on the Great Fields, you would inevitably pitch on one of those spots, or else lie down in water or mud, or on ice. It is as if they had chosen the site of their wigwams at this very season of the year.

March 14, 1842. It is not easy to find one brave enough to play the game of love quite alone with you, but they must get some third person or world to countenance them. They thrust others between. Love is so delicate and fastidious that I see not how it can ever begin. Do you expect me to love with you unless you make my love secondary to nothing else? Your words come tainted if the thought of the world darts between thee and the thought of me. You are not venturous enough for love. It goes alone unscared through wildernesses. As soon as I see people loving what they see merely, and not their own high hopes that they form of others, I pity them, and do not want their love. Did I ask thee to love me who hate myself? No! Love that which I love, and I will love thee that loves it.

The love is faint-hearted and short-lived that

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is contented with the past history of its object. It does not prepare the soil to bear new crops lustier than the old.

I would I had leisure for these things, sighs the world. When I have done my quilting and baking, then I will not be backward.

Love never stands still, nor does its object. It is the revolving sun and the swelling bud.

If I know what I love, it is because I *remember* it.

Life is grand, and so are its environments of Past and Future. Would the face of nature be so serene and beautiful if man's destiny were not equally so?

What am I good for now, who am still searching after high things, but to hear and tell the news, to bring wood and water, and count how many eggs the hens lay? In the mean while I expect my life to begin. I will not aspire longer. I will see what it is I would be after. I will be unanimous.

March 14, 1854. Great concert of song-sparrows in willows and alders along Swamp Brook by river. Hardly hear a distinct strain. Couples chasing each other, and some tree-sparrows with them. . . .

P. M. To Great Meadows. Counted over forty robins with my glass in the meadow north of Sleepy Hollow, on the grass and on the snow.

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A large company of fox-colored sparrows in Heywood's maple swamp close by. I heard their loud, sweet, canary-like whistle thirty or forty rods off, sounding richer than anything else yet; some on the bushes, singing *twee twee twa twa ter tweer tweer twa*, — this the scheme of it only, there being no dental grit to it. They were shy, flitting before me, and I heard a slight susurrus where many were busily scratching amid the leaves in the swamp, without seeing them, and also saw many indistinctly. Wilson never heard but one sing, their common note, where he heard them, being a *cheep*.

From within the house at 5½ P. M. I hear the loud honking of geese, throw up the window, and see a large flock in disordered harrow flying more directly north, or even northwest, than usual. Raw, thick, misty weather.

March 14, 1855. I observe the tracks of sparrows leading to every little sprig of blue curls amid the other weeds, which, with its seemingly empty pitchers, rises above the snow. There seems, however, to be a little seed left in them. This, then, is reason enough why these withered stems still stand, that they may raise these granaries above the snow for the use of the snowbirds.

March 14, 1858. P. M. I see a *Fringilla*

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hiemalis, the first bird, perchance, unless one hawk, which is an evidence of spring, though they lingered with us the past unusual winter till the 19th of January. They are now getting back earlier than our permanent summer residents. It flits past with a rattling or grating *chip*, showing its two white tail feathers.

March 14, 1860. No sooner has the ice of Walden melted than the wind begins to play in dark ripples over the face of the virgin water. It is affecting to see Nature so tender, however old, and wearing none of the wrinkles of age. Ice dissolved is the next moment as perfect water as if it had been melted a million years. To see that which was lately so hard and immovable now so soft and impressible. What if our moods could dissolve thus completely? It is like a flush of life on a cheek that was dead. It seems as if it must rejoice in its own newly acquired fluidity, as it affects the beholder with joy. Often the March winds have no chance to ripple its face at all.

March 15, 1841. When I have access to a man's barrel of sermons, which were written from week to week as his life lapsed, though I now know him to live cheerfully and bravely enough, still I cannot conceive what interval there was for laughter and smiles in the midst of so much sadness. Almost in proportion to

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the sincerity and earnestness of the life will be the sadness of the record. When I reflect that twice a week for so many years he pondered and preached such a sermon, I think he must have been a splenetic and melancholy man, and wonder if his food digested well. It seems as if the fruit of virtue was never a careless happiness. A great cheerfulness have all great wits possessed, almost a profane levity to such as understood them not, but their religion had the broader basis in proportion as it was less prominent. The religion I love is very laic. The clergy are as diseased and as much possessed with a devil as the reformers. They make their topic as offensive as the politician; for our religion is as unpublic and incommunicable as our poetical vein, and to be approached with as much love and tenderness.

March 15, 1842. . . . The poor have come out to employ themselves in the sunshine, the old and feeble to scent the air once more. I hear the bluebird, the song-sparrow, and the robin, and the note of the lark leaks up through the meadows, as if its bill had been thawed by the warm sun. As I am going to the woods I think to take some small book in my pocket, whose author has been there already, whose pages will be as good as my thoughts, and will eke them out or show me human life still gleam-

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ing in the horizon when the woods have shut out the town. But I can find none. None will sail as far forward into the bay of nature as my thought. They stay at home. I would go home. When I get to the wood their thin leaves rustle in my fingers. They are bare and obvious, and there is no halo or haze about them. Nature lies fair and far behind them all.

Cold Spring. I hear nothing but a phœbe, and the wind, and the rattling of a chaise in the wood. For a few years I stay here, not knowing, taking my own life by degrees, and then I go. I hear a spring bubbling near where I drank out of a can in my earliest youth. The birds, the squirrels, the alders, the pines, they seem serene and in their places. I wonder if my life looks as serene to them too. Does no creature, then, see, not only with the eyes of its own narrow destiny, but with God's? When God made man, he reserved some parts and some rights to himself. The eye has many qualities which belong to God more than man. It is his lightning which flashes therein. When I look into my companion's eye, I think it is God's private mine. It is a noble feature; it cannot be degraded. For God can look on all things undefiled.

Pond. Nature is constantly original and

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inventing new patterns, like a mechanic in his shop. When the overhanging pine drops into the water, by the action of the sun and of the wind rubbing it on the shore, its boughs become white and smooth, and assume fantastic forms, as if turned by a lathe. All things, indeed, are subjected to a rotary motion, either gradual and partial, or rapid and complete, from the planet and system to the simplest shell-fish and pebbles on the beach. As if all beauty resulted from an object's turning on its own axis, or from the turning of others about it. It establishes a new centre in the universe. As all curves have reference to their centres or foci, so all beauty of character has reference to the soul, and is a graceful gesture of recognition or waving of the body toward it.

The great and solitary heart will love alone, without the knowledge of its object. It cannot have society in its love. It will expend its love as the cloud drops rain upon the fields over which it floats.

The only way to speak the truth is to speak lovingly. Only the lover's words are heard. The intellect should never speak. It does not utter a natural sound.

How trivial the best actions are. I am led about from sunrise to sunset by an ignoble routine, and yet can find no better road. I

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must make a part of the planet. I must obey the law of nature.

March 15, 1852. This afternoon I throw off my outside coat. A mild spring day. I must hie to the Great Meadows. The air is full of bluebirds; the ground almost entirely bare. The villagers are out in the sun, and every man is happy whose work takes him out doors. I go by Sleepy Hollow toward the Great Fields. I lean over a rail to hear what is in the air liquid with the bluebirds' warble. My life partakes of infinity. The air is as deep as our nature. Is the drawing in of this vital air attended with no more glorious results than I witness? The air is a velvet cushion against which I press my ear. I go forth to make new demands on life. I wish to begin this summer well, to do something in it worthy of it and of me, to transcend my daily routine and that of my townsmen, to have my immortality now, in the *quality* of my daily life, to pay the greatest price, the greatest tax, of any man in Concord, and enjoy the most!! I will give all I am for *my* nobility. I will pay all my days for my success. I pray that the life of this spring and summer may ever lie fair in my memory. May I dare as I have never done. May I persevere as I have never done. May I purify myself anew as with fire and water, soul

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and body. May my melody not be wanting to the season. May I gird myself to be a hunter of the beautiful, that naught escape me. May I attain to a youth never attained. I am eager to report the glory of the universe. May I be worthy to do it, to have got through with regarding human values so as not to be distracted from regarding divine values. It is reasonable that a man should be something worthier at the end of the year than he was at the beginning.

Yesterday's rain, in which I was glad to be drenched, has advanced the spring, settled the ways, and the old foot-path and the brook and the plank bridge behind the hill, which have been buried so long, are suddenly uncovered, as if we had returned to our earth after an absence, and took pleasure in finding things so nearly in the state in which we left them. We go out without overcoats, saunter along the street, look at the aments of the willow beginning to appear, and the swelling buds of the maple and the elm. The Great Meadows are water instead of ice. I see the ice on the bottom in white sheets.

Most men find farming unprofitable. But there are some who can get their living anywhere. If you set them down on a bare rock, they will thrive there. The true farmer is to those that come after him and take the benefit

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of his improvements like the lichen which plants itself on the bare rock and grows and thrives and cracks it and makes vegetable mould to the garden vegetables which are to grow in it.

March 15, 1854. I am sorry to think that you do not get a man's most effective criticism until you provoke him. Severe truth is expressed with some bitterness.

March 15, 1855. Mr. Rice tells me that when he was getting mud out of the little swamp at the foot of Brister's Hill he heard a squeaking and found that he was digging into the nest of what he called a "field mouse," from his description probably the meadow mouse. It was made of grass, etc., and while he stood over it, the mother, not regarding him, came and carried off the young, one by one, in her mouth, being gone some time in each case before she returned, and finally she took the nest itself.

March 15, 1857. P. M. To Hubbard's Close and Walden. I see in the ditches in Hubbard's Close the fine green tips of the spires of grass just rising above the surface of the water in one place, as if unwilling to trust itself to the frosty air. Favored by the warmth of the water and sheltered by the banks of the ditch it has advanced thus far. But generally I see only the flaccid and frost-bitten tips of

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grass which apparently started during that warm spell in February. The surface of the ditches is spotted with these pale and withered frost-bitten bladelets. It was the first green blush (nay, it is purple or lake often, and a true blush) of spring, of that Indian spring we had in February. To be present at the instant when the springing grass at the bottoms of ditches lifts its spear above the surface and bathes in the spring air. Many a first faint crop mantling the pools thus early is mown down by the frost before the villager suspects that vegetation has reawakened.

The trout darts away in the hazy brook there so swiftly in zigzag course that commonly I only see the ripple he makes, in proportion, in this brook only a foot wide, like that made by a steamer in a canal. If I catch a glimpse of him before he buries himself in the mud, it is only a dark film without distinct outline. By his zigzag course he bewilders the eye and avoids capture perhaps.

March 15, 1860. 2 P. M. To Lee's Cliff. . . . A hen-hawk sails away from the wood southward. I get a very fair sight of it sailing overhead. What a perfectly regular and neat outline it presents! an easily recognized figure anywhere. Yet I never see it represented in books. The exact correspondence of the marks

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on one side to those on the other, as of the black or dark tip on one wing to that of the other, and the dark line midway the wing. I do not believe that one can get as correct an idea of the form and color of the under sides of a hen-hawk's wings by spreading those of a dried specimen in his study as by looking up at a free and living hawk soaring above him in the fields. The penalty for obtaining a petty knowledge thus dishonestly is that it is less interesting to men generally as it is less significant. Some, seeing and admiring the neat figure of the hawk sailing two or three hundred feet above their heads, wish to get nearer and hold it in their hands, perchance, not realizing that they can see it best at a distance, better now, perhaps, than ever they will again. What is an eagle in captivity! screaming in a court-yard! I am not the wiser respecting eagles for having seen one there. I do not wish to know the length of its entrails.

How neat and all compact the hawk! Its wings and body are all one piece, the wings apparently the greater part, while its body is a mere fullness, a protuberance between its wings, an inconspicuous pouch hung there. It suggests no insatiable maw, no corpulence, but looks like a large moth, with little body in proportion to its wings, its body naturally more

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etherealized as it soars higher. These hawks, as usual, began to be common about the first of March, showing that they were returning from their winter quarters.

Am surprised to hear from the pool behind Lee's Cliff the croaking of the wood-frog. It is all alive with them, and I see them spread out on the surface. Their note is somewhat in harmony with the rustling of the now drier leaves. It is more like the note of the classical frog as described by Aristophanes, etc. How suddenly they awake. Yesterday, as it were, asleep and dormant; to-day, as lively as ever they are. The awakening of the leafy woodland pools. They must awake in good condition. As Walden opens eight days earlier than I have known it, so this frog croaks about as much earlier. . . . It is remarkable how little certain knowledge even old weather-wise men have of the comparative earliness of the year. They will speak of the passing spring as earlier or later than they ever knew, when perchance the third spring before, it was equally early or late, as I have known.

March 16, 1840. The cabins of the settlers are the points whence radiate these rays of green and yellow and russet over the landscape. Out of these go the axes and spades with which the landscape is painted. How much is the

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Indian summer and the budding of spring related to the cottage. Have not the flight of the crow and the gyrations of the hawk a reference to that roof?

The ducks alight at this season on the windward side of the river in the smooth water, and swim about by twos and threes, pluming themselves and diving to peck at the root of the lily, and the cranberries which the frost has not loosened. It is impossible to approach them within gunshot when they are accompanied by the gull, which rises sooner and makes them restless. They fly to windward first in order to get under weigh, and are more easily reached by the shot if approached on that side. When preparing to fly they swim about with their heads erect, and then, gliding along a few feet with their bodies just touching the surface, rise heavily with much splashing, and fly low at first, if not suddenly aroused, but otherwise rise directly to survey the danger. The cunning sportsman is not in haste to desert his position, but waits to ascertain if, having got themselves into flying trim, they will not return over the ground in their course to a new resting-place.

March 16, 1842. Raleigh's maxims are not true and impartial, but yet are expressed with a certain magnanimity which was natural to the man, as if this selfish policy could easily afford

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to give place in him to a more human and generous one. He gives such advice that we have more faith in his conduct than his principles. He seems to have carried the courtier's life to the highest pitch of magnanimity and grace it was capable of. He is liberal and gracious as a prince, that is, within bounds; brave, chivalrous, heroic, as the knight in armor, and not as a defenseless man. His was not the heroism of Luther, but of Bayard. There was more of grace than of truth in it. He had more taste than character. There may be something petty in a refined taste; it easily degenerates into effeminacy. It does not consider the broadest use. It is not content with simple good and bad, and so is fastidious and curious, or nice only. . . . That is very true which Raleigh says about the equal necessity of war and law, that "the necessity of war which among human actions is most lawless hath some kind of affinity and near resemblance with the necessity of law," for both equally rest on force as their basis, and war is only the resource of law, either on a smaller or larger scale, its authority asserted. In war, in some sense, lies the very genius of law. It is law creative and active, it is the first principle of law. What is human warfare but just this, an effort to make the laws of God and nature take sides with one party?

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Men make an arbitrary code, and, because it is not right, they try to make it prevail by might. The moral law does not want any champion. Its assertors do not go to war. It was never infringed with impunity. It is inconsistent to deny war and maintain law, for if there were no need of war there would be no need of law.

March 16, 1852. Before sunrise. With what infinite and unwearied expectation and proclamation the cocks usher in every dawn, as if there had never been one before, and the dogs bark still, and the thallus of lichens springs, so tenacious of life is nature.

Spent the day in Cambridge Library. . . . What a wilderness of books it is. Looking over books on Canada written within the last three hundred years, I could see how one had been built on another, each author consulting and referring to his predecessors. You could read most of them without changing your position on the steps. It is necessary to find out exactly what books to read on a given subject. Though there may be a thousand books written upon it, it is only necessary to read three or four. They will contain all that is essential, and a few pages will show which they are. Books which are books are all that you want, and there are but half a dozen in any thousand. I saw that while we are clearing the forest in

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our westward progress, we are accumulating a forest of books in our rear, as wild and unexplored as any of nature's primitive wildernesses. The volumes of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries which lie so near on the shelf are rarely opened, are effectually forgotten, and not implied by our literature and newspapers. When I looked into Purchas's Pilgrims, it affected me like looking into an impassable swamp, ten feet deep with sphagnum, where the monarchs of the forest covered with mosses and stretched along the ground were making haste to become peat. Those old books suggested a certain fertility, an Ohio soil, as if they were making a humus for new literatures to spring in. I heard the bellowing of bullfrogs and the hum of mosquitoes reverberating through the thick embossed covers when I had closed the book. Decayed literature makes the richest of all soils.

March 16, 1854. A. M. Another fine morning. Willows and alders along water courses all alive these mornings, and ringing with the trills and jingles and warbles of birds, even as the waters have lately broken loose and tinkle below,— song-sparrows, blackbirds, not to mention robins, etc., etc. The song-sparrows are very abundant, peopling each bush, willow, or alder for a quarter of a mile, and pursuing each

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other as if now selecting their mates. It is their song which especially fills the air, made an incessant and indistinguishable trill and jingle by their numbers. I see ducks afar sailing on the meadow, leaving a long furrow in the water behind them. Watch them at leisure without scaring them, with my glass; observe their free and undisturbed motions. Some dark brown, partly on water, alternately dipping with their tails up, partly on land. Others with bright white breasts, etc., and black heads, of about the same size or larger. (Later date. Probably both sheldrakes.) They dive and are gone some time, and come up a rod off. At first I saw but one, then, a minute after, three. The first phœbe, near the water, is heard.

March 16, 1855. P. M. To Conantum End. At the woodchuck's hole, just beyond the cockspur thorn, I see several diverging and converging tracks of, undoubtedly, a woodchuck or several, which must have come out at least as early as the 13th. The track is about one and three quarters inches wide by two long, the five toes very distinct and much spread, and, including the scrape of the snow before the foot came to its bearing, is somewhat handlike. It is simple and alternate, thus, * * * * commonly, but sometimes much like a rabbit's, and again, like a mink's, somewhat thus

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They had come out and run about directly from hole to hole, six in all, within a dozen rods or more. This appeared to have been all their traveling, as if they had run round a-visiting and waked each other up the first thing. At first they soiled the snow with their sandy feet. At one place they had been clearing out to-day the throats of two holes within a rod of each other, scattering the mud-like sand, made wet by the melting snow, over the pure snow around. I saw where, between these holes, they had sat on a horizontal limb of a shrub oak (which they had tried their teeth on) about a foot from the ground, plainly to warm and dry themselves in the sun, having muddied it all over. I also saw where one had sunned himself on a stone at the foot of a small pitch pine, and tried his teeth on a dead limb of the pine. They could not go in or out of these sandy burrows without being completely covered with sandy mud. The path over the snow between these holes was quite covered with it. They have but four toes on the fore feet with the rudiment of a thumb. The woodchuck's first journey then appears to be to some neighboring hole which he remembers a dozen or fifteen rods off, and, perchance, he goes as straight or unerringly to it as if he had not been asleep all winter. Apparently, after a

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little gossiping there, his first work is to clear out the entrance to his burrow, ejecting the leaves and sand which have there collected. None have traveled beyond these holes, except that one track leads into the swamp. But here are the tracks of foxes bound on longer journeys. They are generally ten or twelve inches apart lengthwise, by three to five wide, ... but are irregular, now two at the usual distance, then two close together or three or four inches apart only. The foot is very shapely, much like a dog's.

March 16, 1858. . . . A still, foggy, and rather warm day. I heard this morning . . . that peculiar drawling note of a hen who has this peevish way of expressing her content at the sight of bare ground and mild weather. The crowing of cocks and cawing of crows tell the same story. . . .

How conversant the Indian, who lived out of doors, must have been with mouse-ear leaves, pine needles, mosses, and lichens which form the crust of the earth. No doubt he had names accordingly for many things for which we have no popular names.

I walk in muddy fields, hearing the tinkle of the new-born rills. Where the melted snow has made a swift rill in the rut of a cart-path, flowing over an icy bottom, and between icy

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banks, I see, just below a little fall an inch high, a circular mass of foam or white bubbles nearly two inches in diameter, slowly revolving, but never moving off. The swift stream at the fall appears to strike one side, as it might the side of a water wheel, and so cause it to revolve; but in the angle between this and the fall half an inch distant, is another circle of bubbles, revolving very rapidly in the opposite direction. The laws, perchance, by which the world was made, and according to which the systems revolve, are seen in full operation in a rill of melted snow.

March 16, 1859. P. M. Launch my boat and sail to Ball's Hill. It is fine, clear weather, and a strong northwest wind. What a change since yesterday! Last night I came home through as incessant heavy rain as I have been out in for many years, through the muddiest and wettest of streets, still partly covered with ice, and the rain-water stood over shoes in many places on the sidewalks. I heard of several who went astray in this water, and had adventures in the dark. You require India-rubber boots then. But to-day I see the children playing at hop-scotch on those very sidewalks, with a bed marked in the dry sand. So rapid are the changes of weather with us and so porous our soil. . . .

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A new phase of the spring is presented, a new season has come. We no longer see dripping, saturated russet and brown banks through rain, hearing at intervals the alarm notes of early robins, banks which reflect a yellowish light, but we see the bare and now pale-brown and dry russet hills. The earth has cast off her white coat and come forth in her clean-washed, sober, russet, early spring dress. As we look over the lively tossing blue waves for a mile or more eastward and westward, our eyes fall on these shining russet hills. Ball's Hill appears in the strong light, at the verge of this undulating blue plain, like some glorious newly-created island of the spring, just sprung up from the bottom in the midst of the blue waters. The fawn-colored oak leaves, with a few pines intermixed, thickly covering the hill, look not like a withered vegetation, but an ethereal kind just expanded and peculiarly adapted to the season and the sky.

Look toward the sun, the water is yellow, as water in which the earth had just washed itself clean of its winter impurities; look from the sun and it is a beautiful dark blue; but in each direction the crests of the waves are white, and you cannot sail or row over this watery wilderness without sharing the excitement of this element. Our sail draws so strongly that we cut

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through the great waves without feeling them. . . . We meet one great gull beating up the course of the river against the wind at Flint's Bridge. It is a very leisurely sort of limping flight, the bird tacking its way along like a sailing vessel. Yet the slow security with which it advances suggests a leisurely contemplativeness, as if it were working out some problem quite at its leisure. As often as its very narrow, long, and curved wings are lifted up against the light, I see a very narrow, distinct light edging to the wing where it is thin. Its black tipped wings. Afterwards from Ball's Hill I see two more circling about, looking for food over the ice and water.

March 16, 1860. Saw a flock of sheldrakes a hundred rods off on the Great Meadows, mostly males, with a few females, all intent on fishing. They were coasting along a spit of bare ground that showed itself in the middle of the meadow, sometimes the whole twelve apparently in a straight line, at nearly equal distances apart, each with its head under water, rapidly coasting along back and forth, and ever and anon one having caught something would be pursued by the others. It is remarkable that they find their finny prey in the middle of the meadow now, and even on the very inmost side, as I afterward saw, though the water is quite

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low. Of course, as soon as they are seen on the meadows there are fishes there to be caught. I never see them fish thus in the channel. Perhaps the fishes lie up there for warmth already.

I also see two gulls nearly a mile off. One stands still and erect for three quarters of an hour, or till disturbed, on a little bit of floated meadow crust which rises above the water, just room for it to stand on, with its great white breast toward the wind. Then another comes flying past it, and alights on a similar perch, but which does not rise quite to the surface, so that it stands in the water. Thus they will stand for an hour, at least. They are not of handsome form, but look like great wooden images of birds, bluish slate, and white. But when they fly they are quite another creature.

March 17, 1842. I have been making pencils all day, and then at evening walked to see an old schoolmate who is going to help make the Welland canal navigable for ships round Niagara. He cannot see any such motives and modes of living as I, professes not to look beyond the securing of certain "creature comforts." And so we go silently different ways with all serenity, I, in the still moonlight through the village this fair evening to write these thoughts in my journal, and he, forsooth, to mature his schemes to ends as good, may be,

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but different. So are we two made, while the same stars shine quietly over us. If I or he be wrong, nature yet consents placidly. She bites her lip and smiles to see how her children will agree. So does the Welland canal get built, and other conveniences, while I live. Well and good, I must confess. Fast-sailing ships are hence not detained.

What means this changing sky, that now I freeze and contract and go within myself to warm me, and now I say it is a south wind and go all soft and warm along the way? I sometimes wonder if I do not breathe the south wind.

March 17, 1852. I catch myself philosophizing most abstractly when first returning to consciousness in the night or morning. I make the truest observations and distinctions then, when the will is yet wholly asleep, and the mind works like a machine without friction. I am conscious of having in my sleep transcended the limits of the individual, and made observations and carried on conversations which in my waking hours I can neither recall nor appreciate. As if in sleep our individual fell into the infinite mind, and at the moment of awakening we found ourselves on the confines of the latter. On awakening we resume our enterprises, take up our bodies, and become limited mind again.

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We meet and converse with those bodies which we have previously animated. There is a moment in the dawn, when the darkness of the night is dissipated and before the exhalations of the day begin to rise, when we see things more truly than at any other time. The light is more trustworthy, since our senses are purer and the atmosphere is less gross. By afternoon all objects are seen in mirage. . . .

To-day the fox-colored sparrow is on its way to Hudson's Bay.

March 17, 1854. . . . The grass is slightly greened on south bank-sides, on the south side of the house. The first tinge of green appears to be due to moisture more than direct heat. It is not on bare, dry banks, but in hollows where the snow melts last, that it is most conspicuous.

March 17, 1855. See now along the edge of the river, the ice being gone, many fresh heaps of clam-shells which were opened by the musquash when the water was higher, about some tree where the ground rises. And in very many places you see where they formed new burrows into the bank, the sand being pushed out into the stream about the entrance, which is still below water, and you feel the ground undermined as you walk.

March 17, 1857. These days, beginning

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with the 14th, more spring-like. I hear the note of the woodpecker from the elms, that early note. Launch my boat. No mortal is alert enough to be present at the first dawn of the spring, but he will presently discover some evidence that vegetation had awaked some days at least before. Early as I have looked this year, perhaps the first unquestionable growth of an indigenous plant detected was the fine tips of grass blades which the frost had killed, floating pale and flaccid, though still attached to their stems, spotting the pools like a slight fall or flurry of dull-colored snow-flakes. After a few mild and sunny days, even in February, the grass in still, muddy pools and ditches, sheltered by the surrounding banks which reflect the heat upon it, ventures to lift the points of its green phalanx into the mild and flattering atmosphere, and advances rapidly from the saffron even to the rosy tints of morning. But the following night comes the frost which with rude and ruthless hand sweeps the surface of the pool, and the advancing morning pales into the dim light of earliest dawn. I thus detect the first approach of spring by finding here and there its scouts and vanguard which have been slain by the rearguard of retreating winter.

March 17, 1858. Hear the first bluebird.

P. M. To the Hill. A remarkably warm and

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pleasant day with a south or southwest wind. The air is full of bluebirds, I hear them far and near on all sides of the hill, warbling in the tree-tops, though I do not distinctly see them. I stand by the wall at the east base of the hill, looking into the alder meadow lately cut off. I am peculiarly attracted by its red-brown maze, seen in this bright sun and mild southwest wind. It has expression in it as a familiar freckled face. Methinks it is about waking up, though it still slumbers. I see the still, smooth pools of water in its midst almost free from ice, and seem to hear the sound of the water soaking into it, as it were, its voice. . . .

Even the shade is agreeable to-day. You hear the buzzing of a fly from time to time, and see the black speck zigzag by.

Ah, there is the note of the first flicker, — a prolonged, monotonous *wick-wick-wick-wick-wick-wick*, etc., or, if you please, *quick-quick-quick*, heard far over and through the dry leaves. But how that single sound peoples and enriches all the woods and fields! They are no longer the same woods and fields that they were. This note really quickens what was dead. It seems to put life into the withered grass and leaves and bare twigs, and henceforth the days shall not be as they have been. It is as when

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a family, your neighbors, return to an empty house after a long absence, and you hear the cheerful hum of voices and the laughter of children, and see the smoke from the kitchen fire. The doors are thrown open, and children go screaming through the hall. So the flicker dashes through the aisles of the grove, throws up a window here, and cackles out of it, and then there, airing the house. He makes his voice ring upstairs and downstairs, and so, as it were, fits it for his habitation and ours, and takes possession. It is as good as a housewarming to all nature. Now I hear and see him louder and nearer on the top of the long-armed white oak, sitting very upright, as is their wont, as it were calling to some of his kind that may also have arrived.

Sitting under the handsome scarlet oak beyond the hill, I hear a faint note far in the wood which reminds me of the robin; again I hear it; it is he, an occasional *peep*. These notes of the earliest birds seem to invite forth vegetation. . . .

Now I hear, when passing the south side of the hill, or first when threading the maple swamp far west of it, the *tchuck tchuck* of a blackbird, and after, a distinct *conqueree*. So it is a red-wing. Thus these four species of birds all come in one day, no doubt, to almost all parts of the town.

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March 17, 1859. 6½ A. M. River rises still higher. . . . A great many musquash have been killed within a week. One says a cart-load have been killed in Assabet. Perhaps a dozen gunners have been out in this town every day. They get a shilling apiece for their skins. One man getting musquash and one mink earned five or six dollars the other day. I hear their guns early and late, long before sunrise and after sunset, for these are the best times.

P. M. To Flint's Bridge by water. The water is very high and as smooth as it ever is. It is very warm. I wear but one coat. On the water, the town and the land it is built on rise but little above the flood. This bright, smooth, and level surface seems here the prevailing element, as if the distant town were an island. I realize how water predominates on the surface of the globe. . . . How different to-day from yesterday. Yesterday was a cool, bright day, the earth just washed bare by the rain, and a strong northwest wind raised respectable billows on our vernal seas and imparted remarkable life and spirit to the scene. To-day it is perfectly still and warm, not a ripple disturbs the surface of these lakes, but every insect, every small black beetle struggling on it, is betrayed. Seen through this air,

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though many might not notice the difference, the russet surface of the earth does not shine, is not bright. I see no shining russet islands with dry but flushing oak leaves. The air is comparatively dead when I attend to it, and it is as if there were the veil of a fine mist over all objects, dulling their edges. Yet this would be called a clear day. These aerial differences in the days are not commonly appreciated, though they affect our spirits.

When I am opposite the end of the willow row, seeing the osiers of perhaps two years old, all in a mass, they are seen to be very distinctly yellowish beneath and scarlet above. They are fifty rods off. Here is the same chemistry that colors the leaf or fruit, coloring the bark. It is generally, probably always, the upper part of the twig, the more recent growth, that is the higher colored, and more flower or fruit like. So leaves are more ethereal the higher up and farther from the root. In the bark of the twigs, indeed, is the more permanent flower or fruit. The flower falls in spring or summer, the fruit and leaves fall or wither in autumn, but the blushing twigs retain their color throughout the winter, and appear more brilliant than ever the succeeding spring. They are winter fruit. It adds greatly to the pleasure of late November, of winter, or of

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early spring walks to look into these mazes of twigs of different colors.

As I float by the Rock, I hear a rustling amid the oak leaves above that new water line, and there being no wind I know it to be a striped squirrel, and soon see its long unseen striped sides flirting about the instep of an oak. Its lateral stripes, alternate black and yellowish, are a type which I have not seen for a long time, = a punctuation mark to indicate that a new paragraph commences in the revolution of the seasons.

March 17, 1860. P. M. To Walden and Goose Pond. I see a large flock of sheldrakes, which have probably risen from the pond, go over my head in the woods, a dozen large and compact birds flying with great force and rapidity, spying out the land, eying every traveler. Now you hear the whistling of their wings, and in a moment they are lost in the horizon. What health and vigor they suggest! The life of man seems slow and puny in comparison, reptilian.

How handsome a flock of red-wings, ever changing its oval form as it advances, from the rear birds pursuing the others.

March 18, 1842. Whatever book or sentence will bear to be read twice, we may be sure was thought twice. I say this thinking

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of Carlyle, who writes pictures or first impressions merely, which consequently will only bear a first reading. As if any transient, any new mood of the best man deserved to detain the world long. I should call his writing essentially dramatic, excellent acting, entertaining especially to those who see rather than those who hear, not to be repeated, more than a joke. If he did not think who made the joke, how shall he think who hears it. He never consults the oracle, but thinks to utter oracles himself. There is nothing in his book for which he is not and does not feel responsible. He does not retire behind the truth he utters, but stands in the foreground. I wish he would just think, and tell me what he thinks, appear to me in the attitude of a man with his ear inclined, who comes as silently and meekly as the morning star, which is unconscious of the dawn it heralds; leading the way up the steep as though alone and unobserved in its observing, without looking behind.

March 18, 1852. That is a pretty good story told of a London citizen just retired to country life on a fortune, who wishing, among other novel rustic experiments, to establish a number of bee communities, would not listen to the advice of his under-steward, but asking fiercely "how he could be so thoughtless as to recom-

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mend a purchase of what might so easily be procured on the Downs?" ordered him to hire ten women to go in quest of bees the next morning, and to prepare hives for the reception of the captives. Early the next day the detachment started for the Downs, each furnished with a tin canister to contain the spoil; and after running about for hours, stunning the bees with blows from their straw bonnets, and encountering stings without number, secured about thirty prisoners who were safely lodged in a hive. But, as has been the fate of many arduous campaigns, little advantage accrued from all this fatigue and danger. Next morning the squire sallied forth to visit his new colony. As he approached, a loud humming assured him that they were hard at work, when, to his infinite disappointment, it was found that the bees had made their escape through a small hole in the hive, leaving behind them only an unfortunate humble-bee, whose bulk prevented his squeezing himself through the aperture, and whose loud complaints had been mistaken for the busy hum of industry. You must patiently study the method of nature, and take advice of the under-steward in the establishment of all communities, both insect and human. Probably the bees could not make industry attractive under the circumstances described above.

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A wise man will not go out of his way for information. He might as well go out of nature, or commit suicide.

March 18, 1853. . . . The bluebird and song-sparrow sing immediately on their arrival, and hence deserve to enjoy some preëminence. They give expression to the joy which the season inspires, but the robin and blackbird only *peep* and *tchuck* at first, commonly, and the lark is silent and flitting. The bluebird at once fills the air with his sweet warbling, and the song-sparrow from the top of a rail pours forth his most joyous strain. Both express their delight at the weather, which permits them to return to their favorite haunts. They are the more welcome to man for it.

The sun is now declining with a warm and bright light on all things, a light which answers to the late afterglow of the year, when, in the fall, wrapping his cloak about him, the traveler goes home at night to prepare for winter. This is the foreglow of the year, when the walker goes home at eve to dream of summer.

March 18, 1855. Round by Hollowell Place *via* Clam-shell. I see with my glass as I go over the railroad bridge, sweeping the river, a great gull standing far away on the top of a muskrat cabin, which rises just above the water. When I get round within sixty rods of

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him, ten minutes later, he still stands on the same spot, constantly turning his head to every side, looking out for foes. Like a wooden image of a bird he stands there, heavy to look at, head, breast, beneath, and rump pure white, slate-colored wings tipped with black, and extending beyond the tail, the herring gull. I can see down to his webbed feet. But now I advance and he rises easily, and goes off northeastward over the river with a leisurely flight.

At Clam-shell Hill I sweep the river again, and see standing midleg deep on the meadow where the water is very shallow, with deeper around, another of these wooden images, which is harder to scare. I do not fairly distinguish black tips to its wings. It is ten or fifteen minutes before I get him to rise, and then he goes off in the same leisurely manner, stroking the air with his wings, and now making a great circle back in his course, so that you cannot tell which way he is bound. By standing so long motionless in these places they may, perchance, accomplish two objects, *i. e.*, catch passing fish (suckers?) like a heron, and escape the attention of man. His utmost motions were to plume himself once, and turn his head about. If he did not move his head he would look like a decoy.

March 18, 1858. 7 A. M. By river. Al-

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most every bush has its song-sparrow this morning, and their tinkling strains are heard on all sides. You see them just hopping under a bush or into some other covert as you go by, turning with a jerk this way and that; or they flit away just above the ground, which they resemble. Theirs is the prettiest strain I have heard yet. Melvin is already out in his boat for all day with his white hound in the prow, bound up the river for musquash, etc., but the river is hardly high enough to drive them out.

P. M. To Fair Haven Hill *via* Hubbard's Bathing Place. How much more habitable a few birds make the fields! At the end of the winter, when the fields are bare, and there is nothing to relieve the monotony of withered vegetation, our life seems reduced to its lowest terms. But let a bluebird come and warble over them, and what a change! The note of the first bluebird in the air answers to the purling rill of melted snow beneath. It is evidently soft and soothing, and, as surely as the thermometer, indicates a higher temperature. It is the accent of the south wind, its vernacular. It is modulated by the south wind.

The song-sparrow is more sprightly, mingling its notes with the rustling of the brush along the water sides, but it is at the same time more terrene than the bluebird. The first wood-

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pecker comes screaming into the empty house, and throws open doors and windows wide, calling out each of them to let the neighbors know of its return. But heard farther off it is very suggestive of ineffable associations, which cannot be distinctly recalled, of long-drawn summer hours, and thus it also has the effect of music. I was not aware that the capacity to hear the woodpecker had slumbered within me so long. When the blackbird gets to a *conqueree* he seems to be dreaming of the sprays that are to be and on which he will perch. The robin does not come singing, but utters a somewhat anxious or inquisitive *peep* at first. The song-sparrow is immediately most at home of those I have named.

Each new year is a surprise to us. We find that we had virtually forgotten the note of each bird, and when we hear it again, it is remembered like a dream, reminding us of a previous state of existence. How happens it that the associations it awakens are always pleasing, never saddening, reminiscences of our sanest hours. The voice of nature is always encouraging.

When I get two thirds up the hill, I look round, and am for the hundredth time surprised by the landscape of the river valley and the horizon with its distant blue-scalloped rim. It

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is a spring landscape, and as impossible a fortnight ago as the song of birds. It is a deeper and warmer blue than in winter, methinks. The snow is off the mountains, which seem even to have come again like the birds. The undulating river is a bright blue channel between sharp-edged shores of ice retained by the willows. The wind blows strong but warm from west by north (so that I have to hold my paper tight while I write this), making the copses creak and roar, but the sharp tinkle of a song-sparrow is heard through it all. But, ah! the needles of the pine, how they shine, as I look down over the Holden wood and westward! Every third tree is lit with the most subdued, but clear, ethereal light, as if it were the most delicate frost-work in a winter morning, reflecting no heat, but only light. And as they rock and wave in the strong wind, even a mile off, the light courses up and down them as over a field of grain, *i. e.*, they are alternately light and dark, like looms above the forest, when the shuttle is thrown between the light woof and the dark web. At sight of this my spirit is like a lit tree. It runs or flashes over their parallel boughs as when you play with the teeth of a comb. Not only osiers, but pine needles, shine brighter, I think, in the spring, and arrowheads and railroad rails, etc., etc.

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Anacreon noticed this spring shining. Is it not from the higher sun and cleansed air and greater animation of nature? There is a warmer red on the leaves of the shrub oak and on the tail of the hawk circling over them.

I sit on the cliff and look toward Sudbury. I see its meeting-houses and its common, and its fields lie but little beyond my ordinary walk. How distant in all important senses may be the town which yet is within sight. With a glass I might, perchance, read the time on its clock. How circumscribed are our walks after all! With the utmost industry we cannot expect to know well an area more than six miles square; and yet we pretend to be travelers, to be acquainted with Siberia and Africa!

March 18, 1860. I examine the skunk cabbage now generally and abundantly in bloom all along under Clam-shell. It is a flower, as it were, without a leaf. All that you see is a stout beaked hood just rising above the dead brown grass in the springy ground where it has felt the heat under some south bank. The single enveloping leaf or spathe is all the flower that you see commonly, and these are as variously colored as tulips, and of singular color, from a very dark, almost black mahogany to a bright yellow, streaked or freckled with mahogany. It is a leaf simply folded around the

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flower, with its top like a bird's beak bent over it for its further protection, evidently to keep off wind and frost, and having a sharp angle down its back. These various colors are seen close together, and the beaks are bent in various directions. All along under that bank I heard the hum of honey-bees in the air, attracted by this flower. Especially the hum of one within a spathe sounds deep and loud. They circle about the bud, at first hesitatingly, then alight and enter at the open door and crawl over the spadix, and reappear laden with the yellow pollen. What a remarkable instinct it is that leads them to this flower. This bee is said to have been introduced by the white man, but how much it has learned. This is almost the only indigenous flower in bloom in this town at present, and probably I and my companion are the only men who have detected it this year. Yet this foreign fly has left its home, probably a mile off, and winged its way to this warm bank to find it. Six weeks hence children will set forth a-Maying, and have indifferent luck. But the first sunny and warmer day in March the honey-bee comes forth, stretches its wings, and goes forth in search of the earliest flower.

March 18, 1861. When I pass by a twig of willow, though of the slenderest kind, rising

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above the sedge in some dry hollow, early in December or midwinter, above the snow, my spirits rise, as if it were an oasis in the desert. The very name, sallow (*salix*, from the Celtic *sal-lis*, near water), suggests that there is some natural sap or blood flowing there. It is a divining rod that has not failed, but stands with its root in the fountain. The fertile willow catkins are those green caterpillar-like ones, commonly an inch or more in length, which develop themselves rapidly after the sterile yellow ones, which we had so admired, are fallen or effete. Arranged around the bare twigs, they often form green wands from eight to eighteen inches long. A single catkin consists of from twenty-five to one hundred pods, more or less ovate and beaked, each of which is closely packed with cotton, in which are numerous seeds, so small that they are scarcely discernible by ordinary eyes.

"The willow worn by forlorn paramour."

As if it were the emblem of despairing love! It is rather the emblem of triumphant love and sympathy with all nature. It may droop, — it is so lithe and supple, — but it never weeps. The willow of Babylon blooms not the less hopefully with us though its other half is not in the New England world at all, and never has been. It droops not to represent David's tears,

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but rather to snatch the crown from Alexander's head. (Nor were poplars ever the weeping sisters of Phaeton, for nothing rejoices them more than the sight of the sun's chariot, and little reck they who drives it.) No wonder its wood was anciently in demand for bucklers, for, like the whole tree, it is not only soft and pliant, but tough and resilient, as Pliny says, not splitting at the first blow, but closing its wounds at once, and refusing to transmit its hurts. I know of one foreign species which introduced itself into Concord as a withe used to tie up a bundle of trees. A gardener stuck it in the ground, and it lived, and has its descendants. Herodotus says that the Scythians divined by the help of willow rods. I do not know any better twigs for this purpose.

You can't read any genuine history, as that of Herodotus or the Venerable Bede, without perceiving that our interest depends not on the subject, but on the man, or the manner in which he treats the subject, and the importance he gives it. A feeble writer, and without genius, must have what he thinks a great theme, which we are already interested in through the accounts of others; but a genius — a Shakespeare, for instance — would make the history of his parish more interesting than another's history of the world. Wherever men have

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lived there is a story to be told, and it depends chiefly on the story-teller, the historian, whether that is interesting or not.

March 19, 1841. No true and brave person will be content to live on such a footing with his fellows and himself as the laws of every household now require. The house is the very haunt and lair of our vice. I am impatient to withdraw myself from under its roof as an unclean spot. There is no circulation there. It is full of stagnant and mephitic vapors.

March 19, 1842. When I walk in the fields of Concord and meditate on the destiny of this prosperous slip of the Saxon family, the unexhausted energies of this new country, I forget that this which is now Concord was once Musketaquid, and that the *American race* has had its destiny also. Everywhere in the fields, in the corn and grain land, the earth is strewn with the relics of a race which has vanished as completely as if trodden in with the earth. Is it not good to remember the eternity behind me as well as the eternity before? Wherever I go I tread in the tracks of the Indian. I pick up the bolt which he has but just dropped at my feet. And if I consider destiny I am on his trail. I scatter his hearthstones with my feet, and pick out of the embers of his fire the simple but enduring implements of the wigwam

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and the chase. In planting my corn in the same furrow which yielded its increase to his support so long, I displace some memorial of him. I have been walking this afternoon over a pleasant field planted with winter rye in a region where this strange people once had their dwelling-place. Another species of mortal men, but little less wild to me than the musquash they hunted. Strange spirits, demons, whose eye could never meet mine. With another nature, and another fate than mine. The crows flew over the edge of the woods, and, wheeling over my head, seemed to rebuke, as dark-winged spirits more akin to the Indian than I. Perhaps only the present disguise of the Indian. If the new has a meaning, so has the old. . . .

A blithe west wind is blowing over all. In the fine flowing haze, men at a distance seem shadowy and gigantic, as ill-defined and great as men should always be. I do not know if yonder be a man or a ghost.

What a consolation are the stars to man, so high and out of his reach, as is his own destiny. . . . My fate is in some sense linked with theirs; and if they are to persevere to a great end, shall I die who could conjecture it? It surely is some encouragement to know that the stars are my fellow-creatures, for I do not sus-

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pect but they are reserved for a high destiny. Man's moral nature is a riddle which only eternity can solve.

I see laws which never fail, of whose failure I never conceived. Indeed, I cannot detect failure anywhere but in my fear. I do not fear that right is not right, that good is not good, but only the annihilation of the present existence. But only that can make me incapable of fear. My fears are as good prophets as my hopes.

March 19, 1852. Observed, as I stood with C—— on the brink of the rill on Conantum, where falling a few inches it produced bubbles, our images three quarters of an inch long, and black as imps, appearing to lean towards each other on account of the convexity of the bubbles. There was nothing but these two distinct black manikins and the branch of the elm over our heads to be seen. The bubbles rapidly burst and succeeded one another.

March 19, 1854. Cold and windy. The meadow ice bears where the water is shallow. . . . Saw in Mill Brook three or four shiners (the first), poised over the sand, with a distinct longitudinal, light-colored line midway along their sides and a darker line below it. This is a noteworthy and characteristic lineament, a cipher, a hieroglyphic, or type of spring. You

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look into some clear, sandy-bottomed brook, where it spreads into a deeper bay, yet flowing cold from ice and snow not far off, and see indistinctly poised over the sand, on invisible fins, the outlines of a shiner, scarcely to be distinguished from the sand behind it, as if it were transparent, or as if the material of which it was builded had all been picked up from there, chiefly distinguished by the lines I have mentioned.

March 19, 1856. . . . The snow was constantly sixteen inches deep at least on a level in open land from January 13th to March 13th.

March 19, 1858. P. M. To Hill and Grackle Swamp. Another pleasant and warm day. Painted my boat this P. M. These spring impressions (as of the apparent waking up of the meadow described day before yesterday) are not repeated the same year, at least not with the same force, for the next day the same phenomenon does not surprise us, our appetite has lost its edge. The other day the face of the meadow wore a peculiar appearance, as if it were beginning to wake up under the influence of the southwest wind and the warm sun, but it cannot again this year present precisely that appearance to me. I have taken a step forward to a new position and must see something else. We perceive and are affected by changes too subtle to be described.

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I see little swarms of those fine fuzzy gnats in the air. It is their wings which are most conspicuous when they are in the sun. Their bodies are comparatively small and black, and they have two mourning plumes on their fronts. Are not these the winter gnat? They keep up a circulation in the air like water bugs on the water. Sometimes there is a globular swarm two feet or more in diameter, suggesting how genial and habitable the air has become. They people a portion of the otherwise vacant air, being apparently for and of the sunshine, in which they are most conspicuous. . . .

By the river I see distinctly red-wings and hear their *conqueree*. They are not associated with grackles. They are an age before their cousins, have attained to clearness and liquidity; they are officers, epauleted. The others are rank and file. I distinguish one even by its flight, hovering slowly from tree-top to tree-top, as if ready to utter its liquid notes. Their whistle is very clear and sharp, while that of the grackle is ragged and split.

It is a fine evening, as I stand on the bridge. The waters are quite smooth, very little ice to be seen. The red-wing and song-sparrow are singing, and a flock of tree-sparrows is pleasantly warbling. A new era has come. The red-wing's gurgle-*ee* is heard where smooth waters

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begin. One or two boys are out trying their skiffs, even like the fuzzy gnats in the sun, and as often as one turns his boat round on the smooth surface, the setting sun is reflected from its side.

I feel reproach when I have spoken with levity, when I have made a jest, of my own existence. The makers have thus secured seriousness and respect for their work in our very organization. The most serious events have their ludicrous aspects, such as death, but we cannot excuse ourselves when we have taken this view of them only. It is pardonable when we spurn the proprieties, even the sanctities, making them the stepping-stones to something higher.

March 19, 1859. The wind makes such a din about your ears that conversation is difficult, your words are blown away and do not strike the ear they were aimed at. If you walk by the water the tumult of the waves confuses you. If you go by a tree or enter the woods the din is yet greater. Nevertheless this universal commotion is very interesting and exciting. The white pines in the horizon, either single trees or whole woods, a mile off in the southwest or west, are particularly interesting. You not only see the regular bilateral form of the tree, all the branches distinct like the frond

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of a fern or a feather (for the pine even at this distance has not merely beauty of outline and color, it is not merely an amorphous and homogeneous or continuous mass of green, but shows a regular succession of flattish leafy boughs or stages in flakes, one above another, like the veins of a leaf, or the leaflets of a frond; it is this richness and symmetry of detail which more than its outline charms us), but that fine silvery light reflected from its needles (perhaps their under sides) incessantly in motion. As a tree bends and waves like a feather in the gale, I see it alternately dark and light, as the sides of the needles which reflect the cool sheen are alternately withdrawn from and restored to the proper angle. The light appears to flash upward from the base of the tree incessantly. In the intervals of the flash it is often as if the tree were withdrawn altogether from sight. I see one large pine wood over whose whole top these cold electric flashes are incessantly passing off harmlessly into the air above. I thought at first of some fine spray dashed upward, but it is rather like broad flashes of pale, cold light. Surely you can never, under other circumstances, see a pine wood so expressive, so speaking. This reflection of light from the waving crests of the earth is like the play and flashing of electricity. No deciduous tree ex-

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hibits these fine effects of light. Literally, incessant sheets not of heat, but of cold lightning, you would say, were flashing there. Seeing some just over the roof of a house which was far on this side, I thought at first that it was something like smoke even, though a rare kind of smoke, that went up from the house. In short, you see a play of light over the whole pine, similar in its cause to that seen on a waving field of grain, but far grander in its effects. Seen at mid-day even, it is still the light of dewy morning alone that is reflected from the needles of the pine. This is the brightening and awakening of the pines, a phenomenon, perchance, connected with the flow of sap in them. I feel somewhat like the young Astyanax at sight of his father's flashing crest. As if in this wind storm of March a certain electricity were passing from earth to heaven through the pines and calling them to life.

We are interested in the phenomena of nature mainly as children are, or as we are in games of chance. They are more or less exciting. Our appetite for novelty is insatiable. We do not attend to ordinary things, though they are most important, but to extraordinary ones. While it is only moderately hot or cold, or wet or dry, nobody attends to it, but when nature goes to an extreme in any of these

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directions we are all on the alert with excitement. Not that we care about the philosophy or the effects of the phenomenon. *E. g.*, when I went to Boston in the early train the coldest morning of last winter, two topics seemingly occupied the attention of the passengers: Morphy's chess victories, and nature's victorious cold that morning. The inhabitants of various towns were comparing notes, and that one whose door opened upon a greater degree of cold than any of his neighbors' doors chuckled not a little. Nearly every one I met asked me, almost before the salutations were over, "how the glass stood" at my house or in my town, — the Librarian of the college, the Register of Deeds at Cambridgeport, a total stranger to me, . . . and each rubbed his hands with pretended horror but real delight, if I named a higher figure than he had yet heard. It was plain that one object which the cold was given us for was our amusement, a passing excitement. It would be perfectly consistent and American to bet on the cold of our respective towns for the morning that is to come. Thus a greater degree of cold may be said to warm us more than a less one. This is a perfectly legitimate amusement, only we should know that each day is peculiar and has its kindred excitements.

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In those wet days like the 12th and 15th, when the browns culminated, the sun being concealed, I was drawn towards and worshiped the brownish light in the sod, the withered grass, etc., on barren hills. I felt as if I could eat the very crust of the earth; I never felt so terrene, never sympathized so with the surface of the earth. From whatever source the light and heat come, thither we look with love.

March 19, 1860. Going along the turnpike I look over to the pitch pines on Moore's hillside, and it strikes me that this pine, take the year round, is the most cheerful tree and most living to look at and have about your house, it is so sunny and full of light, in harmony with the yellow sand there and the spring sun. The deciduous trees are apparently dead and the white pine is much darker, but the pitch pine has an ingrained sunniness and is especially valuable for imparting warmth to the landscape at this season. Yet men will take pains to cut down these trees, and set imported larches in their places! The pitch pine shines in the spring somewhat as the osiers do.

March 20, 1840. In society all the inspiration of my lonely hours seems to flow back on me, and then first to have expression.

Love never degrades its votaries, but lifts them up to higher walks of being; they *over-*

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look one another. All other charities are swallowed up in this. It is gift and reward both. We will have no vulgar cupid for a go-between, to make us the playthings of each other, but rather cultivate an irreconcilable hatred instead of this.

March 20, 1841. Even the wisest and best are apt to use their lives as the occasion to do something else in than to live greatly. But we should hang as fondly over this work as the finishing and embellishment of a poem.

It is a great relief when for a few moments in the day we can retire to our chamber and be completely true to ourselves. It leavens the rest of our hours. In that moment I will be nakedly as vicious as I am; this false life of mine shall have a being at length.

March 20, 1842. My friend is cold and reserved because his love for me is waxing and not waning. These are the early processes; the particles are just beginning to shoot in crystals. If the mountains came to me I should no longer go to the mountains. So soon as that consummation takes place which I wish, it will be past. Shall I not have a friend in reserve? Heaven is to come. I hope this is not it. Words should pass between friends as the lightning passes from cloud to cloud.

I don't know how much I assist in the econ-

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omy of nature when I declare a fact. Is it not an important fact in the history of a plant that I tell my friend where I found it?

We do not wish friends to feed and clothe our bodies (neighbors are kind enough for that), but to do the like offices for our spirits. We wish to spread and publish ourselves as the sun spreads its rays, and we toss the new thought to the friend, and thus it is dispersed. Friends are those twain who feel their interests to be one. Each knows that the other might as well have said what he said. All beauty, all music, all delight springs from apparent dualism, but real unity. My friend is my real brother. I see his nature groping yonder so like my own. Does there go one whom I know, then I go there.

Comparatively speaking I care not for the man or his designs who would make the very highest use of me short of an all-adventuring friendship.

The field where friends have met is consecrated forever.

Man seeks friendship out of the desire to realize a home here.

As the Indian thinks he receives into himself the courage and strength of his conquered enemy, so we add to ourselves all the character and heart of our friend. He is my creation.

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I can do what I will with him. There is no possibility of being thwarted. The friend is like wax in the rays that fall from our own hearts. My friend does not take my word for anything, but he takes me. He trusts me as I trust myself. We only need to be as true to others as we are to ourselves that there may be ground enough for friendship. In the beginnings of friendship, for it does not grow, we realize such love and justice as are attributed to God.

Very few are they from whom we derive any *in*formation. The most only announce and tell tales, but the friend *in*-forms.

How simple is the natural connection of events. We complain greatly of the want of flow and sequence in books, but if the journalist only move himself from Boston to New York, and speak as before, there is link enough. And so there would be if he were as careless of connection and order when he stayed at home, and let the incessant progress which his life makes be the apology for abruptness. Is not my life riveted together? has not it sequence? Do not my breathings follow each other naturally?

March 20, 1853. I notice the downy, swaddled plants now and in the fall, the fragrant life-everlasting and the ribwort, innocents born

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in a cloud. Those algæ I saw the other day in John Hosmer's ditch were more like seaweed than anything else I have seen in the country. They made me look at the whole earth as a seashore, reminded me of Nereids, sea-nymphs, Tritons, Proteus, etc., etc., made the ditches fabulate in an older than the arrowheaded character. Better learn this strange character which nature uses to-day than the Sanskrit, "books in the brooks." . . .

It is evident that the English do not enjoy that contrast between winter and summer that we do, that there is too much greenness and spring in the winter, there is no such wonderful resurrection of the year. Birds kindred with our first spring ones remain with them all winter, and flowers answering to our earliest spring ones put forth there in January. They have no winter in our sense, only a winter like our spring.

The peculiarity of to-day is that now first you perceive that dry, warm, summer-presaging scent from dry oaks and other leaves on the sides of hills and ledges. You smell the summer from afar. The warmth makes a man young again. There is also some dryness, almost dustiness, in the roads. The mountains are white with snow. When the wind is northwest, it is now wintry, but at present it is more

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westerly. The edges of the mountains melt into the sky. It is affecting to be put into communication with such distant objects by the power of vision, actually to look into such lands of promise.

In this spring breeze, how full of life the silvery pines, probably the under sides of their leaves. The canoe-birch sprouts are red or salmon-colored like those of the common, but soon they cast off their salmon-colored jackets, and come forth with a white but naked look, all dangling with ragged reddish curls. What is that little bird that makes so much use of these curls in its nest lined with coarse grass?

In a stubble field started up a bevy (about twenty) of quail which went off to some young pitch pines with a whir like a shot, the plump round birds. The redpolls are still numerous. (Have not seen them again, March 28th.)

March 20, 1855. It is remarkable by what a gradation of days which we call pleasant and warm, beginning in the last of February, we come at last to real summer warmth. At first a sunny, calm, serene winter day is pronounced spring, or reminds us of it. And even the first pleasant spring day, perhaps, we walk with our great-coat buttoned up, and gloves on.

Trying the other day to imitate the honking of geese, I found myself flapping my sides with

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my elbows, and uttering something like *snowack* with a nasal twang and twist of my head, and I produced the note so perfectly in the opinion of the hearers, that I thought I might possibly draw a flock down.

We notice the color of the water especially at this season, when it is recently revealed (and in the fall), because there is little color elsewhere. It shows best in a clear air, contrasting with the russet shores.

March 20, 1858. A. M. By river. The tree-sparrow is perhaps the sweetest and most melodious warbler at present and for some days. It is peculiar, too, for singing in concert along the hedge-rows, much like a canary, especially in the mornings, very clear, sweet, melodious notes, between a twitter and a warble, of which it is hard to catch the strain, for you commonly hear many at once. The note of the *Fringilla hiemalis*, or *chill-lill*, is a jingle, with also a shorter and drier crackling *chip* as it flits by.

At Hubbard's wall how handsome the willow catkins! Those wonderfully bright silvery buttons so regularly disposed in oval schools in the air, or, if you please, along the seams which the twigs make, in all degrees of forwardness, from the faintest, tiniest speck of silver just peeping from beneath the black scales to lusty pussies which have thrown off their scaly coats,

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and show some redness at base or on close inspection. These fixed swarms of arctic buds spot the air very prettily along the hedges. They remind me somewhat by their brilliancy of the snow flecks, which are so bright by contrast at this season when the sun is high. They are grayish, not nearly so silvery a week or ten days later, when more expanded, showing the dark scales.

The fishes are going up the brooks as they open; they are dispersing themselves through the fields and woods, imparting new life into them. They are taking their places under the shelving banks and in the dark swamps. The water running down meets the fishes running up. They hear the latest news. Spring-aroused fishes are running up our veins too. Little fishes are seeking the sources of the brooks, seeking to disseminate their principles. Talk about a revival of religion! Business men's prayer-meetings, with which all the country goes mad now! What if it were as true and wholesome a revival as the little fishes feel which come out of the sluggish waters, and run up the brooks toward their sources. All Nature revives at this season. With her it is really a new life. It cheers me to behold the swarms of gnats which have revived in the spring sun. The fish lurks by the mouth of its native brook

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watching its opportunity to dart up the stream by the cakes of ice. Do the fishes stay to hold prayer-meetings in Fair Haven Bay, while some monstrous pike gulps them down? Or is not each one privately, or with kindred spirits, as soon as possible, stemming the course of its native brook, making its way to more ethereal waters, burnishing its scaly armor by its speed? . . . No wonder we feel the spring influences. There is a motion in the very ground under our feet. Each rill is peopled with new life rushing up it.

In order that a house and grounds may be picturesque and interesting in the highest degree, they must suggest the idea of necessity, proving the devotion of the builder, not of luxury. We need to see the honest and naked life here and there protruding. What is a fort without any foe before it? that is not now sustaining and never has sustained a siege? The gentleman whose purse is always full, and who can meet all demands, though he employs the most famous artists, can never make a very interesting seat. He does not carve from near enough to the bone. No man is rich enough to keep a poet in his pay.

March 20, 1859. P. M. I see under the east side of the house, amid the evergreens, where they are sheltered from the cold north-

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west wind, a company of sparrows, chiefly *Fringilla hiemalis*, two or three tree-sparrows, and one song-sparrow, quietly feeding together. I watch them through a window within six or eight feet. They evidently love to be sheltered from the wind, and at least are not averse to each other's society. One perches on a bush to sing, while others are feeding on the ground; but he is very restless on his perch, hopping about and stooping, as if dodging those that fly over. He must perch on some bit of stubble or some twig to sing. The tree-sparrows sing a little. They are evidently picking up the seeds of weeds which lie on the surface of the ground, invisible to our eyes. They suffer their wings to hang rather loose. The *Fringilla hiemalis* is the largest of the three. It has a remarkably distinct light-colored bill, and when it stretches shows very distinct clear white lateral tail feathers. This stretching seems to be contagious among them, like yawning with us. The tree-sparrows are much brighter brown and white than the song-sparrow. The latter alone scratches once or twice, and is more inclined to hop or creep close to the ground under the fallen weeds. Perhaps it deserves most to be called the *ground*-bird.

March 21, 1840. Our limbs, indeed, have room enough; it is our souls that rust in a cor-

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ner. Let us migrate interiorly without intermission, and pitch our tent each day nearer the western horizon. The really fertile soils and luxuriant prairies lie on this side the Alleghanies. There has been no Hanno of the affections. Their domain is untraveled ground to the Mogul's dominions.

March 21, 1841. To be associated with others by my friend's generosity when he bestows a gift is an additional favor to be grateful for.

March 21, 1853. P. M. To Kibbe Place. The *Stellaria media* is fairly in bloom in Mr. C——'s garden. This, then, is our earliest flower, though it is said to have been introduced. It may blossom under favorable circumstances, in warmer weather than usual, any time in the winter. It has been so much opened that you could easily count its petals any month the past winter, and *plainly* blossoms with the first pleasant weather that brings the robins, etc., in numbers. The bees this morning had access to no flower, so they came to the grafting wax on my boat, though it was mixed with tallow and covered with fresh paint. Often they essayed to light on it and retreated in disgust. Yet one got caught. As they detected the wax concealed and disguised in this composition, so they will receive the earliest

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intelligence of the blossoming of the first flower which contains any sweetness for them. It is a genial and reassuring day; the mere warmth of the west wind amounts almost to balminess. The softness of the air mollifies our own dry and congealed substance. I sit down by a wall to see if I can *muse* again. We become, as it were, pliant and ductile again to strange but memorable influences; we are led a little way by our genius. We are affected like the earth, and yield to the elemental tenderness. Winter breaks up within us. The frost is coming out of me, and I am heaved like the road. Accumulated masses of ice and snow dissolve, and thoughts, like a freshet, pour down unwonted channels. A strain of music comes to solace the traveler over earth's downs and dignify his chagrins. The petty men whom he meets are shadows of grander to come. Roads lead elsewhither than to Carlisle and Sudbury. The earth is uninhabited, but fair to inhabit, like the old Carlisle road. Is, then, the road so rough that it should be neglected? Not only narrow, but rough, is the way that leadeth to life everlasting. Our experience does not wear upon us. It is seen to be fabulous or symbolical, and the future is worth expecting. Encouraged, I set out once more to climb the mountain of the earth, for my steps are sym-

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bolical steps, and I have not reached the top of the earth yet.

In two or three places I hear the ground-squirrel's first chirrup or *qui vive* in the wall, like a bird or a cricket. Though I do not see him, the sun has reached him too.

Ah, then! as I was rising this crowning road, just beyond the old lime-kiln, there leaked into my open ear the faint peep of a hyla from some far pool. One little hyla, somewhere in the fens, aroused by the genial season, crawls up the bank or a bush, squats on a dry leaf, and essays a note or two which scarcely rends the air, does no violence to the zephyr, but yet leaks through all obstacles and far over the downs to the ear of the listening naturalist, as it were the first faint cry of the new-born year, notwithstanding the notes of birds. Where so long I have heard only the prattling and moaning of the wind, what means this tenser, far-piercing sound? All nature rejoices with one joy. If the hyla has revived again, why may not I?

Whatever your sex or position, life is a battle in which you are to show your pluck, and woe be to the coward. Whether passed on a bed of sickness or a tented field, it is ever the same fair play, and admits no foolish distinction. Despair and postponement are cowardice

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and defeat. Men were born to succeed, not to fail.

March 21, 1854. At sunrise to Clam-shell Hill. River skimmed over at Willow Bay last night. Thought I should find ducks cornered up by the ice. They get behind this hill for shelter. Saw what looked like clods of ploughed meadow rising above the ice. Looked with glass and found it to be more than thirty black ducks asleep with their heads in their backs, motionless, thin ice being formed about them. Soon one or two were moving about slowly. There was an open space, eight or ten rods by one or two. At first all were within a space of apparently less than a rod in diameter. It was $6\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. and the sun shining on them, but bitter cold. How tough they are. I crawled far on my stomach and got a near view of them, thirty rods off. At length they detected me and quacked. Some got out upon the ice, and when I rose up, all took to flight in a great straggling flock, looking at a distance like crows, in no order. Yet when you see two or three, the parallelism produced by their necks and bodies steering the same way gives the idea of order.

March 21, 1855. The tree-sparrow, flitting song-sparrow-like through the alders, utters a sharp metallic *tcheep*.

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March 21, 1856. 10 A. M. To my red maple sugar camp. Found that after a pint and a half had run from a single tube after 3 P. M. yesterday afternoon, it had frozen about half an inch thick, and this morning a quarter of a pint more had run. Between 10½ and 11½ A. M. this forenoon I caught two and three quarters pints more from six tubes at the same tree, though it is completely overcast, and threatening rain, — four and one half pints in all. The sap is an agreeable drink like iced water, by chance, with a pleasant but slightly sweetish taste. I boiled it down in the afternoon, and it made one and one half ounces of sugar, without any molasses. This appears to be the average amount yielded by the sugar maple in similar circumstances, *viz.*, on the south edge of a wood, and on a tree partly decayed, two feet in diameter. It is worth while to know that there is all this sugar in our woods, much of which might be obtained by using the refuse wood lying about, without damage to the proprietors, who use neither the sugar nor the wood. I put in saleratus and a little milk while boiling, the former to neutralize the acid, and the latter to collect the impurities in a scum. After boiling it till I burned it a little, and my small quantity would not flow when cool, but was as hard as half-done

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candy, I put it on again, and in a minute it was softened and turned to sugar. Had a dispute with father about the *use* of my making this sugar when I knew it could be done, and might have bought sugar cheaper at Holden's. He said it took me from my studies. I said I made it my study and felt as if I had been to a university. The sap dropped from each tube about as fast as my pulse beat, and as there were three tubes directed to each vessel it flowed at the rate of about one hundred and eighty drops a minute into it. One maple, standing immediately north of a thick white pine, scarcely flowed at all, while a smaller one, farther in the wood, ran pretty well. The south side of a tree bleeds first in the spring. Had a three-quarter inch auger. Made a dozen spouts five or six inches long, hole as large as a pencil, and smoothed with one.

March 21, 1858. P. M. To Ministerial Swamp *via* Little River. I hear the pleasant phebe note of the chickadee. It is, methinks, more like a wilderness note than any other I have heard yet. It is peculiarly interesting that this, which is one of our winter birds also, should have a note with which to welcome the spring.

March 22, 1840. While I bask in the sun on the shores of Walden Pond, by this heat

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and this rustle I am absolved from all obligation to the past. The council of nations may reconsider their votes. The grating of a pebble annuls them.

March 22, 1842. Nothing can be more useful to a man than a determination not to be hurried.

I have not succeeded if I have an antagonist who fails. It must be humanity's success.

I cannot think nor utter my thoughts unless I have infinite room. The cope of heaven is not too high, the sea is not too deep, for him who would unfold a great thought. It must feed me, and warm and clothe me. It must be an entertainment to which my whole nature is invited. I must know that the gods are to be my fellow-guests.

March 22, 1853. As soon as those spring mornings arrive in which the birds sing, I am sure to be an early riser, I am waked by my genius, I wake to inaudible melodies, and am surprised to find myself awaiting the dawn in so serene and joyful and expectant a mood. I have an appointment with Spring. She comes to the window to wake me, and I go forth an hour or two earlier than usual. It is by especial favor that I am waked, not rudely, but gently, as infants should be waked. . . . When we wake indeed with a double awaken-

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ing, not only from our ordinary nocturnal slumbers, but from our diurnal, we burst through the thallus of our ordinary life, we awake with emphasis. . . .

6 A. M. To Cliffs. It affects one's philosophy after so long living in winter quarters to see the day dawn from some hill. Our effete, lowland town is fresh as New Hampshire. It is as if we had migrated and were ready to begin life again in a new country with new hopes and resolutions. See your town with the dew on it, in as wild a morning mist (though thin) as ever draped it. To stay in the house all day such reviving spring days as the past have been, bending over a stove and gnawing one's heart, seems to me as absurd as for a woodchuck to linger in his burrow. We have not heard the news then! sucking the claws of our philosophy when there is game to be had.

The tapping of the woodpecker, *rat-tat-tat*, knocking at the door of some sluggish grub to tell him that the spring has arrived, and his fate, this is one of the season sounds, calling the roll of birds and insects, the reveille. The Cliff woods are comparatively silent. Not yet the woodland birds (except, perhaps, the woodpecker, so far as it migrates), only the orchard and river birds have arrived. Probably the improvements of men thus advance the seasons.

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This is the Bahamas and the tropics or turning point to the redpoll. Is not the woodpecker (downy?) our first woodland bird, come to see what effects the frost and snow and rain have produced on the decaying trees, what trunks will drum? . . .

The oak plain is still red. There are no expanding leaves to greet and reflect the sun as it first falls over the hill.

I go along the river-side to see the now novel reflections. The invading waters have left a thousand little isles where willows and sweet gale and the meadow itself appears. I hear the phebe note of the chickadee, one taking it up behind another, as in a catch, *phe-bee phe-bee.*

That is an interesting morning when one first uses the warmth of the sun instead of fire, bathes in the sun as anon in the river, eschewing fire, draws up to the garret window and warms his thoughts at nature's great central fire, as does the buzzing fly by his side. Like it, too, our Muse, wiping the dust off her long unused wings, goes blundering through the cobwebs of criticism, more dusty still, and carries away the half of them. What venerable cobweb is that which has hitherto escaped the broom, whose spider is invisible, but the "North American Review"?

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Hylodes Pickeringii, a name that is longer than the frog itself! A description of animals, too, from a dead specimen only, as if in a work on man you were to describe a dead man only, omitting his manners and customs, his institutions and divine faculties, from want of opportunity to observe them, suggesting, perhaps, that the colors of the eye are said to be much more brilliant in the living specimen, and that some cannibal, your neighbor, who has tried him on his table, has found him to be sweet and nutritious, good on the gridiron, having had no opportunity to observe his habits, because you do not live in the country. Nothing is known of his habits. Food — seeds of wheat, beef, pork, and potatoes.

I told Stacy the other day that there was another volume of De Quincey's "Essays," wanting to see it in his library. "I know it," says he, "but I shan't buy any more of them, for nobody reads them." I asked what book in his library was most read. He said, "The Wide, Wide World."

In a little dried and bleached tortoise shell about one and three fourths inches long I can easily study his anatomy and the house he lives in. His ribs are now distinctly revealed under his lateral scales, slanted like rafters to the ridge of his roof, for his sternum is so large

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that his ribs are driven round upon his back. It is wonderful to see what a perfect piece of dovetailing his house is, the different plates of his shell fitting into each other by a thousand sharp teeth or serrations, and the scales always breaking joints over them so as to bind the whole firmly together, all parts of his abode variously interspliced and dovetailed. An architect might learn much from a faithful study of it. There are three large diamond-shaped openings down the middle of the sternum, covered only by the scales, through which perhaps he feels, he breasts the earth. His roof rests on four stout posts. This young one is very deep in proportion to its breadth.

March 22, 1855. P. M. Fair Haven Pond *via* Conantum. . . . On the steep hillside south of the pond I observed a rotten and hollow hemlock stump about two feet high, and six inches in diameter, and instinctively approached with my right hand ready to cover it. I found a flying squirrel in it, which, as my left hand covered a small hole at the bottom, ran directly into my right hand. It struggled and bit not a little, but my cotton gloves protected me, and I felt its teeth only once or twice. It also uttered three or four dry shrieks at first, something like *Cr-r-r-ack cr-r-r-ack cr-r-r-ack.* I rolled it up in my handkerchief, and holding

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the ends tight carried it home in my hand, some three miles. It struggled more or less all the way, especially when my feet made any unusual or louder noise going through leaves, etc. I could count its claws as they appeared through the handkerchief, and once it put its head through a hole. It even bit through the handkerchief. Color, as I remember, a chestnut ash inclining to fawn or cream color, slightly browned. Beneath, white. The under edge of its wings (?) tinged yellow, the upper, dark, perhaps black, making a dark stripe. It was a very cunning little animal, reminding me of a mouse in the room. Its *very large* and *prominent black* eyes gave it an interesting, innocent look. Its very neat, flat, fawn-colored, distichous tail was a great ornament. Its "sails" were not very obvious when it was at rest, merely giving it a flat appearance beneath. It would leap off and upward into the air two or three feet from a table, spreading its "sails," and fall to the floor in vain, perhaps strike the side of the room in its upward spring and endeavor to cling to it. It would run up the window by the sash, but evidently found the furniture and walls and floor too hard and smooth for it, and, after some falls, became quiet. In a few moments it allowed me to stroke it, though far from confident. I put it

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in a barrel and covered it up for the night. It was quite busy all the evening gnawing out, clinging for this purpose and gnawing at the upper edge of a sound oak barrel, and then dropping to rest from time to time. It had defaced the barrel considerably by morning, and would probably have escaped, if I had not placed a piece of iron against the gnawed part. I had left in the barrel some bread, apple, shagbarks, and cheese. It ate some of the apple and one shagbark, cutting it quite in two transversely. In the morning it was quiet, and squatted, somewhat curled up, amid the straw, with its tail passing under it and the end curved over its head, very prettily, as if to shield it from the light and keep it warm. I always found it in this position by day when I raised the lid.

March 23, 1855. Carried my flying squirrel back to the woods in my handkerchief. I placed it on the very stump I had taken it from. It immediately ran about a rod over the leaves and up a slender maple sapling about ten feet, then after a moment's pause sprang off and skimmed downward toward a large maple nine feet distant, whose trunk it struck three or four feet from the ground. This it rapidly ascended on the opposite side from me, nearly thirty feet, and then clung to the main stem with its head

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downward, eying me. After two or three minutes' pause, I saw that it was preparing for another spring by raising its head and looking off, and away it went in admirable style, more like a bird than any quadruped I had dreamed of, and far surpassing the impression I had received from naturalists' accounts. I marked the spot it started from and the place where it struck, and measured the height and distance carefully. It sprang off from the maple at the height of twenty-eight feet and a half, and struck the ground at the foot of a tree fifty and one half feet distant, measured horizontally. Its flight was not a regular descent. It varied from a direct line both horizontally and vertically. Indeed, it skimmed much like a hawk, and part of its flight was nearly horizontal. It diverged from a right line eight or ten feet to the right, making a curve in that direction. There were six trees from six inches to a foot in diameter, one a hemlock, in a direct line between the termini, and these it skimmed partly round, passing through their thinner limbs. It did not, so far as I could perceive, touch a twig. It skimmed its way like a hawk between and around the trees. Though it was a windy day, this was on a steep hillside covered with wood and away from the wind, so it was not aided by that. As the ground rose about two feet,

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the distance was to the absolute height as fifty and one half feet to twenty-six and one half feet, or it advanced about two feet for every foot of descent. After the various attempts in the house I was not prepared for this exhibition. It did not fall heavily as in the house, but struck the ground quietly enough, and I cannot believe that the mere extension of the skin enabled it to skim so far. It must be still further aided by its organization. Perhaps it fills itself with air first. . . . Kicking over the hemlock stump, which was a mere shell with holes below, and a poor refuge, I was surprised to find a little nest at the bottom, open above just like a bird's nest, a mere bed. It was composed of leaves, shreds of bark, and dead pine needles. As I *remember*, this squirrel was not more than an inch and a half broad when at rest, but when skimming through the air I should say it was four inches broad. This is the impression I now have. Captain J. Smith says it is reported to fly thirty or forty yards. One Gideon B. Smith, M. D., of Baltimore, who has had much to do with these squirrels, speaks of their curving upward at the end of their flight to alight on a tree trunk, and of their "flying" into his windows. In order to perform all these flights, to strike a tree at such a distance, etc., etc., it is evident it must

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be able to steer. I should say that mine steered like a hawk, that moves without flapping its wings, never being able, however, to get a new impetus after the first spring.

March 22, 1860. Some of the phenomena of an average March are increasing warmth, melting the snow and ice, and gradually the frost in the ground; cold and blustering weather, with high, commonly northwest winds for many days together; misty and other rains taking out frost, whitenings of snow, and winter often back again, both its cold and snow; bare ground and open waters, and more or less of a freshet; some calm and pleasant days reminding us of summer, with a blue haze or a thicker mist over the woods *at last*, in which, perchance, we take off our coats a while, and sit without a fire; the ways getting settled, and some greenness appearing on south banks; April-like rains after the frost is chiefly out; ploughing and planting of peas, etc., just beginning, and the old leaves getting dry in the woods.

March 22, 1861. A driving northeast snow storm yesterday and last night, and to-day the drifts are high over the fences, and the trains stopped. The Boston train due at 8½ A. M. did not reach here till 5 this P. M. One side of all the houses this morning was one color, *i. e.*,

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white, with the moist snow plastered over them so that you could not tell whether they had blinds or not.

When we consider how soon some plants which spread rapidly by seeds or roots would cover an area equal to the surface of the globe, how soon some species of trees, as the white willow, for instance, would equal in mass the earth itself, if all their seeds became full-grown trees, how soon some fishes would fill the ocean if all their ova became full-grown fishes, we are tempted to say that every organism, whether animal or vegetable, is contending for the possession of the planet, and if any one were sufficiently favored, supposing it still possible to grow as at first, it would at length convert the entire mass of the globe into its own substance. Nature opposes to this many obstacles, as climate, myriads of brute and also human foes, and of competitors which may preoccupy the ground. Each species suggests an immense and wonderful greediness and tenacity of life, as if bent on taking entire possession of the globe wherever the climate and soil will permit; and each prevails as much as it does, because of the ample preparations it has made for the contest. It has received a myriad chances, because it never depends on spontaneous generation to save it.

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March 23, 1853. 5 A. M. I hear the robin sing before I rise. 6 A. M. Up the North River. A fresh, cool, spring morning. The white maple may, perhaps, be said to begin to blossom to-day, the male, for the stamens, both anthers and filaments, are conspicuous on some buds. It has opened unexpectedly, and a rich sight it is, looking up through the expanded buds to the sky. This and the aspen are the first trees that ever grow large, I believe, which show the influence of the season thus conspicuously. From Nawshawtuck I see the snow is off the mountains. A large aspen by the island is unexpectedly forward. I already see the red anthers appearing. It will bloom in a day or two.

One studies books of science merely to learn the language of naturalists, to be able to communicate with them.

The frost in swamps and meadows makes it good walking there still. Away, away to the swamps where the silver catkins of the swamp willow shine a quarter of a mile off, those southward penetrating vales of Rupert's Land. The birds, which are merely migratory or tarrying here for a season, are especially gregarious now, the redpoll, *Fringilla hiemalis*, fox-colored sparrow, etc. I judge by the dead bodies of frogs partially devoured in brooks and ditches that many are killed in their hibernacula.

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Evelyn and others wrote when the language was in a tender, nascent state, and could be moulded to express the shades of meaning; when sesquipedalian words, long since cut and apparently dried and drawn to mill, not yet to the dictionary lumber-yard, put forth a fringe of green sprouts here and there along in the angles of their rugged bark, their very bulk insuring some sap remaining; some florid suckers they sustain at least. These words, split into shingles and laths, will supply poets for ages to come.

A man can't ask properly for a piece of bread and butter without some animal spirits. A child can't cry without them.

P. M. To Howard's Meadow. The telegraph harp sounds more commonly now that westerly winds prevail. The winds of winter are too boisterous, too violent or rude, and do not strike it at the right angle when I walk, so that it becomes one of the spring sounds. The ice went out of Walden this forenoon; of Flint's Pond day before yesterday, I have no doubt.

The buds of the shad-blossom look green. The crimson-starred flowers of the hazel begin to peep out, though the catkins have not opened. The alders are almost generally in full bloom, and a very handsome and interesting

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show they make with their graceful tawny pendants inclining to yellow. They shake like eardrops in the wind, almost the first completed ornaments with which the new year decks herself. Their yellow pollen is shaken down and colors my coat like sulphur as I pass through them. I go to look for mud-turtles in Heywood's Meadow. The alder catkins just burst open are prettily marked spirally by streaks of yellow, contrasting with alternate rows of rich reddish brown scales, which make one revolution in the length of the catkin. I hear in Heywood's north meadow the most unmusical low croak from one or two frogs, though it is half ice there yet. A remarkable note with which to greet the new year, as if one's teeth slid off with a grating sound in cracking a nut, but not a frog nor a dimple to be seen.

Man cannot afford to be a naturalist, to look at Nature directly, but only with the side of his eye. He must look through and beyond her. To look at her is as fatal as to look at the head of Medusa. It turns the man of science to stone. I feel that I am dissipated by so many observations. I should be the magnet in the midst of all this dust and filings. I knock the back of my hand against a rock, and as I smooth back the skin I find myself prepared to study lichens there. I look upon man but as

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a fungus. I have almost a slight, dry headache as the result of all this observation. How to observe is how to behave. Oh, for a little Lethe. To crown all, lichens which are so thin are described in the *dry* state, as they are most commonly, not most truly seen. They are, indeed, *dryly* described.

Without being the owner of any land, I find that I have a civil right in the river, that if I am not a land-owner I am a water-owner. It is fitting, therefore, that I should have a boat, a cart, for this my farm. Since it is almost wholly given up to a few of us, while the other highways are much traveled, no wonder that I improve it. Such a one as I will choose to dwell in a township where there are most ponds and rivers, and our range is widest. In relation to the river, I find my natural rights least infringed on. It is an extensive "common" still left. Certain savage liberties still prevail in the oldest and most civilized countries. I am pleased to find that in Gilbert White's day, at least, the laborers in that part of England where he lived enjoyed certain rights of common in the royal forests, so called, where they cut their turf and other fuel, etc., though no large wood, and obtained materials for broom-making, etc., when other labor failed. It is no longer so, according to the editor.

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The cat-tail down puffs and swells in your hand like a mist, or the conjurer's trick of filling a hat with feathers, for when you have rubbed off but a thimbleful, and can close and conceal the wound completely, the expanded down fills your hand to overflowing. Apparently there is a spring to the fine elastic threads which compose the down, which, after having been so long closely packed, on being the least relieved, spring open apace into the form of parachutes to convey the seed afar. Where birds, or the winds, or ice have assaulted them, this has spread like an eruption.

March 23, 1856. I spend a considerable portion of my time observing the habits of the wild animals, my brute neighbors. By their various movements and migrations they fetch the year about to me. Very significant are the flight of geese and the migration of suckers, etc. But when I consider that the nobler animals have been exterminated here, the cougar, panther, lynx, wolverene, wolf, bear, moose, deer, beaver, turkey, etc., etc., I cannot but feel as if I lived in a tamed and, as it were, emasculated country. Would not the motions of those larger and wilder animals have been more significant still? Is it not a maimed and imperfect nature that I am conversant with? As if I were to study a tribe of Indians that

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had lost all its warriors. Do not the forest and the meadow now lack expression? now that I never see nor think of the moose with a lesser forest on his head in the one, nor of the beaver in the other? When I think what were the various sounds and notes, the migrations and works, and changes of fur and plumage, which ushered in the spring and marked the other seasons of the year, I am reminded that this my life in nature, this particular round of natural phenomena which I call a year, is lamentably incomplete. I listen to a concert in which so many parts are wanting. The whole civilized country is, to some extent, turned into a city, and I am that citizen whom I pity. Many of those animal migrations and other phenomena by which the Indians marked the season are no longer to be observed. I seek acquaintance with Nature to know her moods and manners. Primitive nature is the most interesting to me. I take infinite pains to know all the phenomena of the spring, for instance, thinking that I have here the entire poem, and then, to my chagrin, I learn that it is but an imperfect copy that I possess and have read, that my ancestors have torn out many of the first leaves, and grandest passages, and mutilated it in many places. I should not like to think that some demigod had come before me and picked out

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some of the best of the stars. I wish to know an entire heaven and an entire earth. All the great trees and beasts, fishes and fowl are gone; the streams perchance are somewhat shrunk.

P. M. To Walden. I think I may say that the snow has not been less than a foot deep on a level in open land until to-day, since January 6th, about eleven weeks. I am reassured and reminded that I am the heir of eternal inheritances which are inalienable, when I feel the warmth reflected from this sunny bank, and see the yellow sand and the reddish subsoil, and hear some dried leaves rustle and the trickling of melting snow in some sluiceway. The eternity which I detect in nature I predicate of myself also. How many springs I have had this same experience! I am encouraged, for I recognize this steady persistency and recovery of nature as a quality of myself. Now the steep south hillsides begin to be bare, and the early sedge and the sere, but still fragrant, pennyroyal and rustling leaves are exposed, and you see where the mice have sheared off the sedge, and also made nests of its top during the winter. There, too, the partridges resort, and perhaps you hear the bark of a striped squirrel, and see him scratch toward his hole, rustling the leaves: for all the inhabitants of nature are attracted by this bare and dry spot as well as you.

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The muskrat houses were certainly very few and small last summer, and the river has been remarkably low up to this time, while the previous fall they were very numerous and large, and in the succeeding winter the river rose remarkably high. So much for the muskrat sign.

March 23, 1859. P. M. Walk to Cardinal Shore, and sail to Well Meadow and Lee's Cliff. As we entered Well Meadow we saw a hen-hawk perch on the topmost plume of the tall pines at the head of the meadow; soon another appeared, probably its mate, but we looked in vain for a nest there. It was a fine sight, their soaring above our heads, presenting a perfect outline and, as they came round, showing their rust-colored tails with a whitish rump, or, as they sailed away from us, that slight tetering or quivering motion of their dark-tipped wings, seen edgewise, now on this side, now on that, by which they balanced and directed themselves. These are the most eagle-like of our common hawks. They very commonly perch upon the very topmost plume of a pine, and, if motionless, are rather hard to distinguish there.

While reconnoitring we hear the peep of one hylodes somewhere in the sheltered recess in the woods, and afterward, on the Lee side shore, a single croak from a wood-frog.

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We cross to Lee's shore and sit upon the bare rocky ridge overlooking the flood southwest and northeast. It is quite sunny and sufficiently warm. The prospect thence is a fine one, especially at this season when the water is high. The landscape is very agreeably diversified with hill and dale, meadow and cliff. As we look southwest how attractive the shores of russet capes and peninsulas laved by the flood. Indeed, that large tract east of the bridge is now an island. How firm that low, undulating, russet-land! At this season and under these circumstances, the sun just come out and the flood high around it, russet, so reflecting the light of the sun, appears to me the most agreeable of colors, and I begin to dream of a russet fairy-land and Elysium. How dark and terrene must be green, but this smooth russet reflects almost all the light. That broad and low, but firm island, with but few trees to conceal the contour of the ground and its outline, with its fine russet sward, firm and soft as velvet, reflecting so much light; all the undulations of the earth, its nerves and muscles revealed by the light and shade, and the sharper ridgy edge of steep banks where the plough has heaped up the earth from year to year, this is a sort of fairy-land and Elysium to my eye. The tawny, couchant island! Dry land for the

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Indian's wigwam in the spring, and still strewn with his arrow-points. The sight of such land reminds me of the pleasant spring days in which I have walked over such tracts looking for these relics. How well, too, the smooth, firm, light-reflecting, tawny earth contrasts with the darker water which surrounds it, or perchance lighter sometimes. At this season, when the russet colors prevail, the contrast of water and land is more agreeable to behold. What an inexpressibly soft curving line is the shore! and if the water is perfectly smooth and yet rising, you seem to see it raised one eighth of an inch with swelling lip above the immediate shore it kisses, as in a cup. Indian isles and promontories. Thus we sit on that rock, hear the first wood-frog's croak, and dream of a russet Elysium. Enough for the season is the beauty thereof.

The qualities of the land that are most attractive to our eyes now are dryness and firmness. It is not the rich, black soil, but warm and sandy hills and plains which tempt our steps. We love to sit on and walk over sandy tracts in the spring, like cicindelas. These tongues of russet land tapering and sloping into the flood do almost speak to one. They are alternately in sun and shade. When the cloud is passed and they reflect their pale brown light to me, I am tempted to go to them. . . . I see the shadow

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of a cloud, and it chances to be a hollow ring with sunlight in its midst, passing over the hilly sproutland toward the Baker house, a sproutland of oaks and birches; and, owing to the color of the birch twigs, perhaps, the russet changes to a dark purplish tint as the cloud moves along. And then as I look further along eastward in the horizon, I am surprised to see strong purple and violet tinges in the sun from a hillside a mile off, densely covered with full-grown birches. I would not have believed that under the spring sun so many colors were brought out. It is not the willows only that shine, but, under favorable circumstances, many other twigs, even a mile or two off. The dense birches, so far that their white stems are not distinct, reflect deep, strong purple and violet colors from the distant hillsides opposite to the sun. Can this have to do with the sap flowing in them?

As we sit there, we see coming swift and straight northeast along the river valley, not seeing us and therefore not changing his course, a male goosander, so near that the green reflections of his head and neck are plainly visible. He looks like a paddle-wheel steamer, so oddly painted, black and white and green, and moves along swift and straight, like one. Erelong the same returns with his mate, the red-throated, the male taking the lead. The loud

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peop (?) of a pigeon woodpecker is heard, and anon the prolonged loud and shrill cackle calling the thin-wooded hillsides and pastures to life. It is like the note of an alarm clock set last fall so as to wake nature up at exactly this date, *Up up up up up up up up up!* What a rustling it seems to make among the dry leaves. . . . Then I see come slowly flying from the southwest a great gull, of voracious form, which at length, by a sudden and steep descent, alights in Fair Haven Pond, scaring up a crow which was seeking its food on the edge of the ice.

March 24, 1842. Those authors are successful who do not write down to others, but make their own taste and judgment their audience. By some strange infatuation we forget that we do not approve what yet we recommend to others. It is enough if I please myself with writing; I am then sure of an audience.

It is always singular to meet common sense in the very old books, as in the "Veeshnoo Sarma," as if they could have dispensed with the experience of later times. We had not given space enough to their antiquity for the accumulation of wisdom. We meet even a trivial wisdom in them as if truth were already hackneyed. The present is always younger than antiquity. A playful wisdom, which has eyes behind as well as before, and oversees itself.

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The wise can afford to doubt in his wisest moment. The easiness of doubt is the ground of his assurance. Faith keeps many doubts in her pay. If I could not doubt I should not believe.

It is seen in the old scripture how wisdom is older than the talent of composition. The story is as slender as the thread on which pearls are strung; it is a spiral line growing more and more perplexed till it winds itself up and dies like the silkworm in its cocoon. It seems as if the old philosopher could not talk without moving, and each motion were made the apology or occasion for a sentence, but this being found inconvenient, the fictitious progress of the tale was invented.

The great thoughts of a wise man seem to the vulgar who do not generalize to stand far apart like isolated mounts, but science knows that the mountains which rise so solitary in our midst are parts of a great mountain chain, dividing the earth, and the eye that looks into the horizon toward the blue Sierra melting away in the distance may detect their flow of thought. These sentences which take up your common life so easily are not seen to run into ridges because they are the table-land on which the spectator stands. . . . That they stand frowning upon one another or mutually reflecting the

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sun's rays is proof enough of their common basis.

The book should be found where the sentence is, and its connection be as inartificial. It is the inspiration of a day and not of a moment. The links should be gold also. Better that the good be not united than that a bad man be admitted into their society. When men can select, they will. If there be any stone in the quarry better than the rest they will forsake the rest because of it. Only the good will be quarried.

March 24, 1853. In many cases I find that the willow cones are a mere dense cluster of loose leaves, suggesting that the scales of cones of all kinds are only modified leaves, a crowding and stinting of the leaves, as the stem becomes a thorn, and in this view those conical bunches of leaves of so many of the pine family have relation to the cones of the tree in origin as well as in form. The leaf, perchance, becomes calyx, cone, husk, and nutshell.

March 24, 1855. Passing up the Assabet by the hemlocks where there has been a slide and some rocks have slid down into the river, I think I see how rocks come to be found in the midst of rivers. Rivers are continually changing their channels, eating into one bank and adding their sediment to the other, so that fre-

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quently where there is a great bend, you see a high and steep bank or hill on one side which the river washes, and a broad meadow on the other. As the river eats into the hill, especially in freshets, it undermines the rocks, large and small, and they slide down alone or with the sand and soil to the water's edge. The river continues to eat into the hill, carrying away all the lighter parts, the sand and soil, to add to its meadows or islands somewhere, but leaves the rocks where they rested, and thus, in course of time, they occupy the middle of the stream, and later still the mud of the meadow, perchance, though they may be buried under the mud. But this does not explain how so many rocks lying in streams have been split in the direction of the current. Again rivers appear to have traveled back and worn into the meadows of their own creating, and then they become more meandering than ever. Thus, in the course of ages, the river wriggles in its bed till it feels comfortable. Time is cheap and rather insignificant. It matters not whether it is a river which changes from side to side in a geological period, or an eel that wriggles past in an instant. . . .

It is too cold to think of those signs of spring which I find recorded under this date last year. The earliest of such signs in vegetation, noticed

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thus far, are the maple sap, the willow catkins and those of the poplar (not examined early), *the celandine* (?), *grass on south banks*, and perhaps cowslip in sheltered places, alder catkins loosened, and also white maple buds loosened. I am not sure that the osiers are decidedly brighter yet.

March 24, 1857. If you are describing any occurrence or a man, make two or more distinct reports at different times. Though you may think you have said all, you will to-morrow remember a whole new class of facts which perhaps interested most of all at the time, but did not present themselves to be reported. If we have recently met and talked with a man and would report our experience, we commonly make a very partial report at first, failing to seize the most significant, picturesque, and dramatic points. We describe only what we have had time to digest and dispose of in our minds, without being conscious that there were other things really more novel and interesting to us, which will not fail to occur to us and impress us suitably at last. How little that occurs to us are we prepared at once to appreciate. We discriminate at first only a few features, and we need to reconsider our experience from many points of view and in various moods to preserve the whole force of it.

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March 24, 1858. P. M. To Fair Haven Pond, east side. The pond not yet open. A cold north-by-west wind which must have come over much snow and ice. The *chip* of the song-sparrow resembles that of the robin, *i. e.*, its expression is the same, only fainter, and reminds me that the robin's *peep*, which sounds like a note of distress, is also a chip or call note to its kind.

Returning about 5 P. M. across the Depot Field, I scare up from the ground a flock of about twenty birds which fly low, making a short circuit to another part of the field. At first they remind me of bay-wings, except that they are in a flock, show no white in tail, are, I see, a little larger, and utter a faint *sveet sveet* merely, a sort of sibilant *chip*. Starting them again, I see that they have black tails, very conspicuous when they pass here. They fly in the flock somewhat like snow buntings, occasionally one surging upward a few feet in pursuit of another, and they alight about where they first were. It is almost impossible to distinguish them upon the ground, they squat so flat, and so much resemble it, running amid the stubble. But at length I stand within two rods of one and get a good view of its markings with my glass. They are the *Alauda alpestris* or shore lark, a quite sizable and handsome bird.

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A delicate, pale, lemon-yellow line above, with a dark line through the eye. The yellow again on the sides of the neck and on the throat, with a buff-ash breast and reddish brown tinges. Beneath, white. Above, rusty brown behind, and darker, ash or slate with purplish brown reflections, forward. Legs black. Bill blue and black. Common to the old and new world.

March 24, 1859. Now when the leaves get to be dry and rustle under your feet, the peculiar dry note *wurrk wurrk wur r r k wurk*, of the wood-frog is heard faintly by ears on the alert, borne up from some unseen pool in a woodland hollow which is open to the influences of the sun. It is a singular sound for awakening nature to make, associated with the first warmer days when you sit in some sheltered place in the woods amid the dried leaves. How moderate on her first awakening, how little demonstrative! You may sit half an hour before you will hear another. You doubt if the season will be long enough for such oriental and luxurious slowness. But they get on nevertheless, and by to-morrow or in a day or two they croak louder and more frequently. Can you be sure that you have heard the very first wood-frog in the township croak? Ah, how weather-wise must he be! There is no guessing at the weather with him. He makes the

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weather in his degree, he encourages it to be mild. The weather, what is it but the temperament of the earth? and he is wholly of the earth, sensitive as its skin in which he lives, and of which he is a part. His life relaxes with the thawing ground. He pitches and tunes his voice to chord with the rustling leaves which the March wind has dried. Long before the frost is quite out he feels the influence of the spring rains and the warmer days. His is the very voice of the weather. He rises and falls like quicksilver in the thermometer. You do not perceive the spring so surely in the actions of men, their lives are so artificial. They may make more or less fire in their parlors, and their feelings accordingly are not good thermometers. The frog far away in the wood, that burns no coal nor wood, perceives more surely the general and universal changes.

There sits on the bank of the ditch a *Rana fontinalis*. He is mainly a bronze brown, with a very dark greenish snout, etc.; with the raised line down the side of the back. This, methinks, is about the only frog which the marsh hawk could have found hitherto.

March 25, 1842. Great persons are not soon learned, not even their outlines, but they change like the mountains in the horizon as we ride along.

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Comparatively speaking, I care not for the man or his designs who would make the highest use of me short of an all adventuring friendship. I wish by the behavior of my friend toward me to be led to have such regard for myself as for a box of precious ointment. I shall not be as cheap to myself if I see that another values me.

We talk much about education, and yet none will assume the office of an educator. I never gave any one the whole advantage of myself. I never afforded him the culture of my love. How can I talk of charity who at last withhold the kindness which alone makes charity desirable. The poor want nothing less than me myself, and I shirk charity by giving rags and meat. What can I give or what deny to another but myself?

That person who alone can understand you you cannot get out of your mind.

The artist must work with indifferency. Too great interest vitiates his work.

March 25, 1858. P. M. I see many fox-colored sparrows flitting past in a straggling manner into the birch and pine woods on the left, and hear a sweet warble there from time to time. They are busily scratching like hens amid the dry leaves of that wood (not swampy), from time to time the rearmost moving forward

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one or two at a time, while a few are perched here and there on the lower branches of a birch or other tree, and I hear a very low and sweet whistling strain, commonly half-finished, from one every two or three minutes.

You might frequently say of a poet away from home that he was as mute as a bird of passage, uttering a mere *chip* from time to time, but follow him to his true habitat, and you shall not know him, he will sing so melodiously.

March 25, 1859. A score of my townsmen have been shooting and trapping musquash and mink of late. They are gone all day; early and late they scan the rising tide; stealthily they set their traps in remote swamps, avoiding one another. Am not I a trapper, too? early and late scanning the rising flood, ranging by distant woodsides, setting my traps in solitude, and baiting them as well as I know how, that I may catch life and light, that my intellectual part may taste some venison and be invigorated, that my nakedness may be clad in some wild furry warmth?

As to the color of spring, I should say that hitherto in dry weather it was fawn-colored; in wet, more yellowish or tawny. When wet, the green of the fawn is supplied by the lichens and the mosses.

March 26, 1842. I thank God that the

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cheapness which appears in time and the world, the trivialness of the whole scheme of things, is in my own cheap and trivial moment. I am time and the world. In me are summer and winter, village life, and commercial routine, pestilence and famine, and refreshing breezes, joy and sadness, life and death.

I must confess I have felt mean enough when asked how I was to act on society, what errand I had to mankind. Undoubtedly I did not feel mean without a reason, and yet my loitering is not without a defense. I would fain communicate the wealth of my life to men, would really give them what is most precious in my gift. I would secrete pearls with the shellfish and lay up honey with the bees for them. I will sift the sunbeams for the public good. I know no riches I would keep back. I have no private good unless it be my peculiar ability to serve the public. This is the only individual property. Each one may thus be innocently rich. I inclose and foster the pearl till it is grown. I wish to communicate those parts of my life which I would gladly live again.

It is hard to be a good citizen of the world in any great sense, but if we do render no interest or increase to mankind out of that talent God gave us, we can at least preserve the principal unimpaired.

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In such a letter as I like there will be the most naked and direct speech, the least circumlocution.

March 26, 1853. Up the Assabet, scared from his perch a stout hawk, the red-tailed, undoubtedly, for I saw very plainly the cow-red when he spread his wings from off his tail (and rump?). I rowed the boat three times within gunshot before he flew, twice within four rods, while he sat on an oak over the water; I think because I had two ladies with me, which was as good as bushing the boat. He was an interesting, eagle-like object as he sat upright on his perch with his back to us, now and then looking over his shoulder, the broad-backed, flat-headed, curve-beaked bird.

March 26, 1855. 6 A. M. Still cold and blustering. I see a muskrat house just erected, two feet or more above the water, and sharp. At the Hubbard Path a mink comes tetering along the ice by the side of the river. I am between him and the sun, and he does not notice me. He seems daintily lifting his feet with a jerk as if his toes were sore. They seem to go a-hunting at night along the edge of the river. Perhaps I notice them more at this season, when the shallow water freezes at night, and there is no vegetation along the shore to conceal them.

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The lark sings perched on the top of an apple-tree, *seel-yah seel-yah*, and then perhaps *seel-yah-see-e*, and several other strains quite sweet and plaintive, contrasting with the cheerless season and the bleak meadow. Farther off I hear one with notes like *ah-tick-seel-yah*.

P. M. Sail down to the Great Meadows. A strong wind with snow driving from the west and thickening the air. The farmers pause to see me scud before it. At last I land and walk further down on the meadow bank. . . . I notice the paths made by the muskrats when the water was high in the winter, leading from the river up the bank to a bed of grass, above or below the surface. When it runs under the surface I frequently slump into it, and can trace it to the bed by the hollow sound when I stamp on the frozen ground. They have disfigured the banks very much in some places the past winter. Clams have been carried into these galleries a rod or more under the earth. When the ice still remained thick over the galleries, after the water had gone down, they kept on the surface and terminated, perhaps, at some stump where the earth was a little raised.

March 26, 1856. The Romans introduced husbandry into England where but little was practiced before, and the English have introduced it into America. So we may well read

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the Roman authors for a history of this art as practiced by us.

I am sometimes affected by the consideration that a man may spend the whole of his life after boyhood in accomplishing a particular design, as if he were put to a special and petty use, without taking time to look around him and appreciate the phenomenon of his existence. If so many purposes are thus necessarily left unaccomplished, perhaps unthought of, we are reminded of the transient interest we have in this life. Our interest in our country, the spread of liberty, etc., strong, and, as it were, innate as it is, cannot be as transient as our present existence here. It cannot be that all those patriots who die in the midst of their career have no further connection with the career of their country.

March 26, 1857. As I lay on the fine dry sedge in the sun in a deep and sheltered hollow, I heard one fine, faint peep from over the windy ridge between the hollow in which I lay and the swamp, which at first I referred to a bird, and looked round at the bushes which crowned the brim of this hollow to find it, but erelong a regularly but faintly repeated *phe, phe, phe, phe*, revealed the *Hylodes Pickeringii*. It was like the light reflected from the mountain ridges within the shaded portion of the moon, forerun-

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ner and herald of the spring. You take your walk some pretty cold and windy, but sunny, March day through rustling woods, perhaps, glad to take shelter in the hollows or on the south side of hills or woods. When ensconced in some sunny and sheltered hollow with some just-melted pool at its bottom, as you recline on the fine withered sedge in which the mice have had their galleries, leaving it pierced with countless holes, and are, perchance, dreaming of spring there, a single dry hard croak, like a grating twig, comes up from the pool. Where there is a small, smooth surface of melted ice bathing the bare button bushes, or water andromeda, or tufts of sedge, such is the earliest voice of the liquid pools, hard and dry and grating. Unless you watch long and closely, not a ripple nor a bubble will be seen, and a marsh hawk will have to look long to find one. The notes of the croaking frog and the hylodes are not only contemporary with, but analogous to, the blossom of the skunk-cabbage and white maple.

March 26, 1860. This dry, whitish, tawny or drab color of the fields, withered grass lit by the sun, is the color of a teamster's coat. It is one of the most interesting effects of light now, when the sun, coming out of clouds, shines brightly on it. It is the *fore*-glow of the year.

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There is certainly a singular propriety in that color for the coat of a farmer or teamster, a hunter or shepherd, who is required to be much abroad in our landscape at this season. It is in harmony with nature, and you are less conspicuous in the fields and can get nearer wild animals for it. For this reason I am the better satisfied with the color of my hat, a drab, than with that of my companion, which is black, though his coat is of the exact tint, and better than mine. But, again, my dusty boots harmonize better with the landscape than his black and glossy India-rubbers. I had a suit once in which, methinks, I could glide across the fields unperceived half a mile in front of a farmer's windows. It was such a skillful mixture of browns, dark and light, properly proportioned, with even some threads of green in it, by chance. It was of loose texture and about the color of a pasture with patches of withered sweet fern and lechea. I trusted a good deal to my invisibility in it when going across lots, and many a time I was aware that to it I owed the near approach of wild animals.

No doubt my dusty and tawny cowhides surprise the street walkers who wear patent-leather congress shoes, but they do not consider how absurd such shoes would be in my vocation, to thread the woods and swamps in. C—— was

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saying properly enough the other day, as we were making our way through a dense patch of shrub oak, "I suppose that those villagers think we wear these old, worn hats with holes all along the corners for oddity; but Coombs, the musquash hunter and partridge and rabbit snarer, knows better. He understands us. He knows that a new and square-cornered hat would be spoiled in one excursion through the shrub oaks." When a citizen comes to take a walk with me, I commonly find that he is lame and disabled by his shoeing. He is sure to wet his feet, tear his coat, and jam his hat, and the superior qualities of my boots, coat, and hat appear. I once went into the woods with a party for a fortnight. I wore my old and common clothes, which were of Vermont gray. They wore, no doubt, the best they had for such an occasion, of a fashionable color and quality. I thought that they were a little ashamed of me while we were in the towns. They all tore their clothes badly but myself, and I, who, it chanced, was the only one provided with needles and thread, enabled them to mend them. When we came out of the woods I was the best dressed of the party.

One of the most interesting sights this P. M. is the color of the yellow sand in the sun at the bottom of Nut Meadow and Second Division

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brooks. The yellow sands of a lonely brook, seen through the rippling water, with the shadows of the ripples like films passing over it.

Tried by various tests this season fluctuates. Thus the skunk-cabbage may flower March 2, as in 1860, or not till April 6 or 8, as in 1854 and 1855, a variation of about thirty-six days.

The bluebird may be seen February 24, as in 1850, 1857, and 1860, or not till March 24, as in 1856, a variation of about twenty-eight days.

The yellow-spotted tortoise may be seen February 23, as in 1857, or not till March 28, as in 1855, a variation of thirty-three days.

The wood-frog may be heard March 15, as this year, or not till April 13, as in 1856, a variation of twenty-nine days.

Thus tried by these four tests, March fluctuates about a month, receding into February or advancing into April.

March 27, 1840. Think how finite, after all, the known world is. Money coined at Philadelphia is a legal tender over how much of it. You may carry ship-biscuit, beef, and pork quite round to the place you set out from. England sends her felons to the other side for safe-keeping and convenience.

March 27, 1841. Magnanimity, though it look expensive for a short course, is always economy in the long run. To make up a great

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action there are no subordinate mean ones. We can never afford to postpone a true life to-day to any future and anticipated nobleness. We think if by tight economy we can manage to arrive at independence, then indeed we will begin to be generous without stay. We sacrifice all nobleness to a little present meanness. If a man charge you $800 pay him $850, and it will leave a clean edge to the sum. It will be like nature, overflowing and rounded like the bank of a river, not close and *precise* like a bank or ditch.

It is always a *short* step to peace of mind.

I must not lose any of my freedom by being a farmer and landholder. Most who enter on any profession are doomed men. The world might as well sing a dirge over them forthwith. The farmer's muscles are rigid; he can do one thing long, not many well. His pace seems determined henceforth. He never quickens it. A very rigid Nemesis is his fate. When the right wind blows, or a star calls, I can leave this arable and grass ground without making a will or settling my estate. I would buy a farm as freely as a silken streamer. Let me not think my front windows must face east henceforth because a particular hill slopes that way. My life must undulate still. I will not feel that my wings are clipped when once I have

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settled on ground which the law calls my own, but find new pinions grown to the old, and talaria to my feet beside.

Sunday, March 27, 1842. The eye must be firmly anchored to this earth which beholds birches and pines waving in the breeze in a certain light, a serene, rippling light.

Cliffs. The little hawks have just come out to play, like butterflies rising one above the other in endless alternation, far below me. They swoop from side to side in the broad basin of the tree-tops, with wider and wider surges, as if swung by an invisible pendulum. They stoop down on this side and scale up on that. Suddenly I look up and see a new bird, probably an eagle, quite above me, laboring with the wind not more than forty rods off. It was the largest bird of the falcon kind I ever saw. I was never so impressed by any flight. She sailed the air, and fell back from time to time like a ship on her beam-ends, holding her talons up as if ready for the arrows. I never allowed before for the grotesque attitude of our national bird. The eagle must have an educated eye.

See what a life the gods have given us, set round with pain and pleasure. It is too strange for sorrow, it is too strange for joy. One while it looks as shallow, though as intri-

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cate, as a Cretan labyrinth, and again it is a pathless depth. I ask for bread incessantly, that my life sustain me as much as meat my body. No man knoweth in what hour his life may come. Say not that Nature is trivial, for to-morrow she will be radiant with beauty.

March 27, 1853. . . . P. M. To Martial Miles's. . . . The hazel is fully out. The 23d was perhaps full early to date them. It is in some respects the most interesting flower yet, though so minute that only an observer of nature, or one who looked for them, would notice it. It is the most highly and richly colored yet, ten or a dozen little rays at the end of the buds, which are at the ends and along the sides of the bare stems. Some of the flowers are a light, some a dark crimson. The high color of this minute, unobserved flower at this cold, leafless, and almost flowerless season! It is a beautiful greeting of the spring, when the catkins are scarcely relaxed and there are no signs of life in the bush. Moreover, they are so tender that I never get one home in good condition. They wilt and turn black.

Tried to see the faint-croaking frogs at J. P. Brown's pond in the woods. They are remarkably timid and shy; had their noses and eyes out, croaking, but all ceased, dived, and concealed themselves, before I got within a rod of

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the shore. Stood perfectly still amid the bushes on the shore before one showed himself; finally five or six. All eyed me and gradually approached me within three feet to reconnoitre. Though I waited about half an hour, they would not utter a sound nor take their eyes off me, plainly affected by curiosity. Dark brown, and some, perhaps, dark green, about two inches long. Had their noses and eyes out when they croaked. If described at all, they must be either young of *Rana pipiens* or *Rana palustris*.

March 27, 1857. . . . I would fain make two reports in my journal: first, the incidents and observations of to-day, and by to-morrow I review the same and record what was omitted before, which will often be the most significant and poetic part. I do not know at first what it is that charms me. The men and things of to-day are wont to be fairer and truer in to-morrow's memory.

Men talk to me about society, as if I had none and they had some, as if it were only to be got by going to the sociable or to Boston.

Compliments and flattery oftenest excite my contempt by the pretension they imply, for who is he that assumes to flatter me? To compliment often implies an assumption of superiority in the complimenter. It is, in fact, a subtle detraction.

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March 27, 1858. P. M. Sail to Bittern Cliff. Scare up a flock of sheldrakes just off Fair Haven Hill, the conspicuous white ducks, sailing straight hither and thither. . . . Soon after, we scare up a flock of black ducks. We land and steal over the hill through the woods, expecting to find them under Lee's Cliff, as indeed we do, having crawled over the hill through the woods on our stomachs. There we watched various waterfowl for an hour. There are a dozen sheldrakes (or goosanders), and among them four or five females. They are now pairing. I should say one or two pairs are made. At first we see only a male and female quite on the alert, some way out on the pond, tacking back and forth, and looking every way. They keep close together, headed one way, and when one turns the other also turns quickly. The male appears to take the lead. Soon the rest appear, sailing out from the shore into sight. We hear a squeaking note as if made by a pump, and presently see four or five great herring gulls wheeling about. Sometimes they make a sound like the scream of a hen-hawk. They are shaped somewhat like a very thick white rolling-pin sharpened at both ends. At length they alight near the ducks. The sheldrakes at length acquire confidence, come close in shore, and go to preening themselves. . . .

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They are all busy about it at once. . . . Among them, or near by, I at length detect three or four whistlers by their wanting the red bill, being considerably smaller and less white, having a white spot on the head, a black back, and altogether less white. They also keep more or less apart and do not dive when the rest do. . . . At length I detect two little dippers, as I have called them, though I am not sure that I have ever seen the male before. They are male and female. . . . They are incessantly diving close to the button bushes. The female is apparently uniformly black, or rather dark brown, but the male has a conspicuous crest. Apparently white on the hind head, with a white breast and white line on the lower sides of the neck; that is, the head and breast are black and white conspicuously.

The sheldrake has a peculiar long clipper look, often moving rapidly straight forward over the water. It sinks to very various depths, sometimes, as when apparently alarmed, showing only its head and neck and the upper part of its back, and at others, when at ease, floating buoyantly on the surface, as if it had taken in more air, showing all its white breast and the white along its sides. Sometimes it lifts itself up on the surface and flaps its wings, revealing its whole rosaceous breast and its

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lower parts, looking in form like a penguin. . . . It was a pretty sight to see a pair of them tacking about, always within a foot or two of each other, heading the same way, now on this short tack, now on that, the male taking the lead, sinking deep and looking every way. When the whole twelve had come together they would soon break up again, and were continually changing their ground, though not diving, now sailing slowly this way a dozen rods, and now that, and now coming in near the shore. Then they would all go to preening themselves, thrusting their bills into their backs, and keeping up such a brisk motion that you could not get a fair sight of one's head. From time to time you heard a slight titter, not of alarm, but perhaps a breeding note, for they were evidently selecting their mates. Then it was surprising to see how, briskly sailing off one side, they went to diving, as if they had suddenly come across a school of minnows. A whole company would disappear at once. . . . Now for nearly a minute there is not a feather to be seen, and then next minute you see a party of half a dozen there chasing one another and making the water fly far and wide.

March 27, 1859. . . . It is remarkable how modest and unobtrusive these early flowers are. The musquash and duck hunter or the farmer

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might, and do, commonly pass by them without perceiving them. They steal into the air and light of spring without being noticed for the most part. The sportsman seems to see a mass of weather-stained dead twigs, whose wood is exposed here and there, but, nearer, the spots are recognized for the pretty bright buttons of the willow; and the flowers of the alder (now partly in bloom) look like masses of bare, barren twigs, last year's twigs, and would be taken for such.

March 28, 1842. How often must one feel, as he looks back on his past life, that he has gained a talent, but lost a character. My life has got down into my fingers. My inspiration at length is only so much breath as I can breathe. Society affects to estimate men by their talents, but really feels and knows them by their character. What a man does, compared with what he is, is but a small part. To require that our friend possess a certain skill is not to be satisfied till he is something less than our friend. Friendship should be a great promise, a perennial springtime. I can conceive how the life of the gods may be dull and tame, if it is not disappointed and insatiate. One may well feel chagrined when he finds he can do nearly all he can conceive. How poor is the life of the best and wisest; the petty side

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will appear at last. Understand once how the best in society live, with what routine, with what tedium and insipidity, with what grimness and defiance, with what chuckling over an exaggeration of the sunshine! I am astonished, I must confess, that man looks so respectable in nature, that, considering the littlenesses Socrates must descend to in the twenty-four hours, he yet wears a serene countenance and even adorns nature.

March 28, 1852. 10¼ P. M. The geese have just gone over, making a great cackling and awaking people in their beds. They will probably settle in the river.

March 28, 1853. —— asked me to read the Life of Dr. Chalmers, which, however, I did not promise to do. Yesterday, Sunday, she was heard, through the partition, shouting to ——, who is deaf, "Think of it, he stood half an hour to-day to hear the frogs croak, and he would n't read the Life of Chalmers!"

6 A. M. To Cliffs. . . . The woods ring with the cheerful jingle of the *Fringilla hiemalis*. This is a very trig and compact little bird, and appears to be in good condition. The straight edge of slate on their breasts contrasts remarkably with the white from beneath. The short, light-colored bill is also very conspicuous amid the dark slate, and when they fly

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from you, the two white feathers in their tails are very distinct at a good distance. They are very lively, pursuing each other from bush to bush.

P. M. To Assabet. Saw eleven black ducks near the bathing-place in the Assabet, flying up stream. Came within three or four rods of me, then wheeled and went down. Their faint *quack* sounded much like the croak of the frogs occasionally heard now in the pools. As they wheeled and went off they made a very fine whistling sound, which yet, I think, was not made by their wings.

I saw flying to the alders by the river what I have no doubt was the tree-sparrow, with a ferruginous crown or head, and wings also partly ferruginous; light beneath. It was in company with a few of the *Fringilla hiemalis*. Sang sweetly, much like some notes of the canary. One pursued another. It was not large enough for the fox-colored sparrow. Perhaps I have seen it before within the month.

As near as I can make out, the hawks or falcons I am likely to see here are the American Sparrow Hawk, the Fish Hawk, the Goshawk, the Short-winged Buzzard (if this is the same with Browne's stuffed sharp-shinned or slate-colored hawk, not slate in his specimen). Is not this the common small hawk that soars?

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The Red-tailed Hawk. (Have we the red-shouldered hawk, about the same size and aspect with the last?) The Hen Harrier. I suppose it is the adult of this, with the slate color, over meadows.

March 28, 1855. P. M. To Cliffs, along river. . . . I run about these cold, blustering days, on the whole, perhaps, the worst to bear in the year (partly because they disappoint expectation), looking almost in vain for some animal or vegetable life stirring. The warmest springs hardly allow me the glimpse of a frog's heel as he settles himself in the mud, and I think I am lucky if I see one winter-defying hawk or a hardy duck or two at a distance on the water. As for the singing of birds, the few that have come to us, it is too cold for them to sing and for me to hear. The bluebird's warble comes feeble and frozen to my ear. . . .

Over a great many acres the meadows have been cut up into neat squares and other figures by the ice of February, as if ready to be removed; sometimes separated by narrow and deep channels like muskrat paths, but oftener the edges have been raised and apparently stretched, and settling have not fallen into their places exactly, but lodged on their neighbors. Even yet you see cakes of ice surmounted by a shell of meadow-crust which has preserved them, while all around is bare meadow.

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March 28, 1856. I think to say to my friend, There is but *one* interval between us. You are on one side of it, I on the other. You know as much about it as I, how wide, how impassable it is. I will endeavor not to blame you. Do not blame me. There is nothing to be said about it. Recognize the truth, and pass over the intervals that are bridged.

Farewell, my friends, my path inclines to this side the mountains, yours to that. For a long time you have appeared further and further off to me. I see that you will at length disappear altogether. For a season my path seems lonely without you. The meadows are like barren ground. The memory of me is steadily passing away from you. My path grows narrower and steeper, and the night is approaching. Yet I have faith that in the infinite future new suns will rise and new plains expand before me, and I trust I shall therein encounter pilgrims who bear that same virtue that I recognized in you, who will be that very virtue that was you. I accept the everlasting and salutary law which was promulgated as much that spring when I first knew you, as this when I seem to leave you.

My former friends, I visit you as one walks amid the columns of a ruined temple; you belong to an era, a civilization and glory, long

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past. I recognize still your fair proportions, notwithstanding the convulsions we have felt, and the weeds and jackals that have sprung up around. I come here to be reminded of the past, to read your inscriptions, the hieroglyphics, the sacred writings. We are no longer the representatives of our former selves.

Love is a thirst that is never slaked. Under the coarsest rind the sweetest meat. If you would read a friend aright you must be able to read through something thicker and opaquer than horn. If you can read a friend, all languages will be easy to you. Enemies publish themselves. They declare war. The friend never declares his love.

March 28, 1857. At Lee's Cliff and this side, I see half a dozen buff-edged butterflies, *Vanessa antiopa*, and pick up three dead or dying, — two together, the edges of their wings gone. Several are fluttering over the dry rock *débris* under the cliff, in whose crevices probably they have wintered. Two of the three I pick up are not dead, though they will not fly. Verily their day is a short one. What has checked their frail life? Within, the buff edge is black with bright sky-blue spots. Those little oblong spots on the black ground are light as you look directly down on them, but from one side they change through violet to a crys-

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talline rose purple. . . . The broad buff edge of the *Vanessa antiopa's* wings harmonizes with the russet ground it flutters over, and as it stands concealed in the winter with its wings folded above its back, in a cleft in the rocks, the gray-brown underside of its wings prevents its being distinguished from the rocks themselves.

When I witness the first ploughing and planting I acquire a long-lost confidence in the earth, that it will nourish the seed that is committed to its bosom. I am surprised to be reminded that there is warmth in it. We have not only warmer skies then, but a warmer earth. The frost is out of it and we may safely commit these seeds to it in some places.

Yesterday I walked with a farmer beside his team and saw one furrow turned quite round his field. What noble work is ploughing, with the broad and solid earth for material, the ox for fellow-laborer, and the simple but efficient plough for tool. Work that is not done in any shop, in a cramped position, work that tells, that concerns all men, which the sun shines and the rain falls on, and the birds sing over. You turn over the whole vegetable mould, expose how many grubs, and put a new aspect on the face of the earth. It comes pretty near to making a world; redeeming a swamp does, at

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any rate. A good ploughman is a *terræ filius*. A ploughman, we all know, whistles as he drives his team afield.

Often I can give the truest and most interesting account of any adventure I have had after years have elapsed, for then I am not confused, only the most significant facts surviving in my memory. Indeed, all that continues to interest me after such a lapse of time is sure to be pertinent, and I may safely record all that I remember.

March 28, 1858. I notice the hazel stigmas in a warm hollow just beginning to peep forth. This is an unobserved, but very pretty and interesting evidence of the progress of the season. I should not have noticed it, if I had not carefully examined the fertile buds. It is like a crimson star first dimly detected in the twilight. The warmth of the day in this sunny hollow above the withered sedge has caused the stigmas to show their lips through the scaly shield. They do not project more than the thirtieth of an inch. Some not the sixtieth. The staminate catkins are also considerably loosened. Just as the turtles put forth their heads, so these put forth their stigmas in the spring. How many accurate thermometers there are on every hill and in every valley! Measure the length of the hazel stigmas and you can tell

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how much warmth there has been this spring. How fitly and exactly any season of the year may be described by indicating the condition of some flower.

It is surprising that men can be divided into those who lead an indoor and those who lead an outdoor life, as if birds and quadrupeds were to be divided into those that lived a within-nest or burrow life, and those that lived without their nests and holes chiefly. How many of our troubles are house-bred! He lives an outdoor life, *i. e.*, he is not squatted behind a door. It is such a questionable phrase as an "honest man," or the "naked eye," as if the eye which is not covered with a spy-glass should properly be called naked.

March 28, 1859. P. M. Paddle to the Bedford line. It is now high time to look for arrowheads, etc. I spend many hours every spring gathering the crop which the melting snow and rain have washed bare. When at length some island in the meadow or some sandy field elsewhere has been ploughed, perhaps for rye, in the fall, I take note of it, and do not fail to repair thither as soon as the earth begins to be dry in the spring. If the spot chances never to have been cultivated before, I am the first to gather a crop from it. The farmer little thinks that another reaps a har-

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vest which is the fruit of his toil. As much ground is turned up in a day by the plough as Indian implements could not have turned over in a month, and my eyes rest on the evidences of an *aboriginal* life which passed here a thousand years ago, perchance. Especially if the knolls in the meadows are washed by a freshet where they have been ploughed the previous fall, the soil will be taken away lower down and the stones left, the arrowheads, etc., and soapstone pottery amid them, somewhat as gold is washed in a dish or tom. I landed on two spots this P. M. and picked up a dozen arrowheads. It is one of the regular pursuits of the spring. As sportsmen go in pursuit of duck and musquash, and scholars of rare books, and travelers of adventures, and poets of ideas, and all men of money, I go in search of arrowheads when the season comes round again. So I help myself to live worthily, loving my life as I should. It is a good collyrium to look on the bare earth, to pore over it so much, getting strength to all your senses, like Antæus. You can hardly name a more innocent or wholesome entertainment. As I am thus engaged I hear the rumble of the bowling-alley's thunder, which has begun again in the village. It comes before the earliest natural thunder. But what its lightning is, and what atmospheres it purifies,

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I do not know. . . . I have not decided whether I had better publish my experience in searching for arrowheads in three volumes with plates, or try to compress it into one. These durable implements seem to have been suggested to the Indian mechanic with a view to my entertainment in a succeeding period. After all the labor expended on it, the bolt may have been shot but once, perchance, and the shaft, once attached to it, decayed, and there lay the arrowhead, sinking into the ground, awaiting me. They lie all over the hills with like expectation, and in due time the husbandman is sent, and, tempted by the promise of corn or rye, he ploughs the land and turns them up to my view. Many as I have found, methinks the last one gave me about the same delight that the first did. Some time or other, you would say, it had rained arrowheads, for they lie all over the surface of America. You may have your peculiar tastes; certain localities in your town may seem from association unattractive and uninhabitable to you; you may wonder that the land bears any money value there, and pity some poor fellow who is said to survive in that neighborhood; but plough up a new field there, and you will find the omnipresent arrow point strewn over it, and it will appear that the red man with other tastes and associations lived

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there too. No matter how far from the modern road or meeting-house, no matter how near. They lie in the meeting-house cellar, and they lie in the distant cow-pasture. Some collections which were made a century ago by the curious like myself have been dispersed again, and they are still as good as new. You cannot tell the third-hand ones (for they are all second-hand) from the others, such is their persistent out-of-doors durability. They were chiefly made to be lost. They are sown like a grain that is slow to germinate, broadcast over the earth. As the dragon's teeth bore a crop of soldiers, so these bear crops of philosophers and poets, and the same seed is just as good to plant again. It is a stone fruit. Each one yields me a thought. I come nearer to the maker of it than if I found his bones. They would not prove any wit that wielded them, such as this work of his bones does. It is humanity inscribed on the face of the earth, patent to my eyes as soon as the snow is off, not hidden away in some crypt or grave, or under a pyramid. No disgusting mummy, but a clean stone, the best symbol or letter that could have been transmitted to me. The red man, his mark!

At every step I see it. . . . It is no single inscription on a particular rock, but a footprint or rather a mindprint

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left everywhere and altogether illegible. No Vandals, however vandalic in their disposition, can be so industrious as to destroy them. . . . They are not fossil bones, but, as it were, fossil thoughts, forever reminding me of the mind that shaped them. I would fain know that I am treading in the tracks of human game, that I am on the trail of mind. . . . When I see these signs I know that the subtle spirits that made them are not far off, into whatever form transmuted. What if you do plough and hoe amid them, and swear that not one stone shall be left upon another, they are only the less likely to break in that case. When you turn up one layer you bury another so much the more securely. They are at peace with rust. This arrowheaded character promises to outlast all others. The larger pestles and axes may perchance be broken and grow scarce, but the arrowhead shall perhaps never cease to wing its way through the ages to eternity. . . . When some Vandal chieftain has razed to earth the British Museum, and perchance the winged bulls of Nineveh shall have lost most, if not all, of their features, the arrowheads which the museum contains may find themselves at home again in familiar dust, and resume their shining in new springs upon the bared surface of the earth, to be picked up for the thousandth time

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by the shepherd or savage that may be wandering there, and once more suggest their story to him. . . . They cannot be said to be lost or found. Surely their use was not so much to bear its fate to some bird or quadruped, or man, as it was to lie here near the surface of the earth for a perpetual reminder to the generations that come after. — As for museums, I think it is better to let nature take care of our antiquities. These are our antiquities, and they are cleaner to think of than the rubbish of the Tower of London, and they are a more ancient armor than is there. It is a recommendation that they are so inobvious that they occur only to the eye and thought that chances to be directed toward them.

When you pick up an arrowhead and put it in your pocket, it may say, "Eh, you think you have got me, do you? But I shall wear a hole in your pocket at last, or if you put me in your cabinet, your heir or great-grandson will forget me, or throw me out of the window directly, or when the house falls I shall drop into the cellar, and then I shall be quite at home again, ready to be found again. Perhaps some new red man, that is to come, will fit me to a shaft and make me do his bidding for a bow shot; what reck I?"

The meadows, which are still covered far

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and wide, are quite alive with black ducks. When walking about on the low eastern shore at the Bedford bound, I heard a faint honk, and looked around near the water with my glass, thinking it came from that side or perhaps from a farm-yard in that direction. I soon heard it again, and at last we detected a great flock of geese passing over quite on the other side of us and pretty high up. From time to time one of the company uttered a short note, — that peculiarly metallic, clangorous sound. They were in a single undulating line, and, as usual, one or two were from time to time crowded out of the line, apparently by the crowding of those in the rear, and were flying on one side and trying to recover their places. But at last a second short line was formed, meeting the long one at the usual angle, and making a figure somewhat like a hay-hook. I suspect it will be found there is really some advantage in large birds of passage flying in the wedge form and cleaving their way through the air, — that they really do overcome its resistance best in this way, and perchance the direction and strength of the wind determine the comparative length of the two sides. The great gulls fly generally up and down the river valley, cutting off the bends of the river, and so do these geese. They fly sympathizing with

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the river, a stream in the air, soon lost in the distant sky. If you scan the horizon at this season you are very likely to detect a flock of dark ducks moving with rapid wing athwart the sky, or see the undulating line of migrating geese.

Ball's Hill, with its withered oak leaves and its pines, looks very fair to-day, a mile and a half off across the water, through a very thin varnish or haze. It reminds me of the isle which was called up from the bottom of the sea and given to Apollo. How charming the contrast of land and water, especially where there is a temporary island in the flood with its new and tender shores of waving outline, so withdrawn, yet habitable; above all, if it rises into a hill high above the water, so contrasting with it the more, and, if that hill is wooded, suggesting wildness. Our vernal lakes have a beauty to my mind which they would not possess if they were more permanent. Everything is in rapid flux here, suggesting that nature is alive to her extremities and superficies. To-day we sail swiftly on dark rolling waves, or paddle over a sea as smooth as a mirror, unable to touch the bottom where mowers work and hide their jugs in August, coasting the edge of maple swamps where alder tassels and white-maple flowers are kissing the tide that has risen to

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meet them. But this particular phase of beauty is fleeting. Nature has so many shows for us, she cannot afford to give much time to this. In a few days, perchance, these lakes will all have run away to the sea. Such are the pictures which she paints. When we look at our masterpieces we see only dead paint and its vehicle, which suggests no liquid life rapidly flowing off from beneath. But in nature it is constant surprise and novelty. . . . As we sweep past the north end of Poplar Hill, its now dryish, pale brown, mottled sward, clothing its rounded slope which was lately saturated with moisture, presents very agreeable hues. In this light, in fair weather, the patches of now dull greenish masses contrast just regularly enough with the pale brown grass. It is like some rich but modest-colored Kidderminster carpet, or rather the skin of a monster python tacked to the hillside and stuffed with earth. . . . The earth lies out now like a leopard drying her lichen and moss spotted skin in the sun, her sleek and variegated hide. I know that the few raw spots will heal over. Brown is the color for me, the color of our coats and our daily lives, the color of the poor man's loaf. The bright tints are pies and cakes, good only for October feasts, which would make us sick if eaten every day. . . .

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Undoubtedly the geese fly more numerously over rivers which, like ours, flow northeasterly; are more at home with the water under them. Each flock runs the gauntlet of a thousand gunners; and when you see them steer off from you and your boat, you may remember how great their experience in such matters may be, how many such boats and gunners they have seen and avoided between here and Mexico. Even now (though you, low plodding, little dream it) they may perhaps see one or two more lying in wait ahead. They have an experienced ranger of the air for their guide. The echo of one gun hardly dies away, before they see another pointed at them. How many bullets or smaller shot have sped in vain toward their ranks!

Ducks fly more irregularly, and shorter distances at a time. The geese rest in fair weather by day only in the midst of our broadest meadows and ponds. So they go anxious and earnest to hide their nests under the pole. The gulls, more used to boats and sails, will often fly quite near without manifesting alarm.

March 29 and 30, 1842. Though nature's laws are more immutable than any despot's, they rarely seem rigid, but relax with license in summer weather. We are not often nor harshly reminded of the things we may not do. I am often astonished to see how long and with what

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manifest infringement of the natural laws some men I meet in the highway maintain life. Nature does not deny them quarter. They do not die without priest. All the while she rejoices, for if they are not one part of her, they are another.

I am convinced that consistency is the secret of health. How many a poor man, striving to live a pure life, pines and dies after a life of sickness, and his successors doubt if nature is not pitiless; while the confirmed and consistent sot, who is content with his rank life like mushrooms, a mass of corruption, still dozes comfortably under a hedge. He has made his peace with himself; there is no strife. Nature is really very kind and liberal to all persons of vicious habits. They take great licenses with her. She does not exhaust them with many excesses.

How hard it is to be greatly related to mankind. They are only our uncles and aunts and cousins. I hear of some persons greatly related, but only he is so who has all mankind for his friend. Our intercourse with the best grows soon shallow and trivial. They no longer inspire us. After enthusiasm comes insipidity. The sap of all noble schemes drieth up, and the schemers return again and again in despair to "common sense and labor." If I could help

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infuse some life and heart into society, should I not do a service? Why will not the gods mix a little of the wine of nobleness with the air we drink? let virtue have some firm foothold in the earth? Where does she dwell? Who are the salt of the earth? May not Love have some resting-place on the earth as sure as the sunshine on the rock? The crystals imbedded in the cliffs sparkle and gleam from afar, as if they did certainly enrich our planet, but where does any virtue permanently sparkle and gleam? She was sent forth over the earth too soon, before the earth was prepared for her. Rightfully we are to each other the gate of heaven and redeemers from sin, but how we overlook these lowly and narrow ways. We will go over the bald mountain-tops without going through the valleys. Men do not, after all, meet on the ground of their real acquaintance and actual understanding of one another, but degrade themselves immediately into the puppets of convention. They do as if, in given circumstances, they had agreed to know each other only so well. They rarely get so far as to inform one another gratuitously, and use each other like the sea and the woods for what is new and inspiring there. The best intercourse and communion they have is a silence above and behind their speech. We should be very sim-

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ple to rely on words. What we knew before always interprets a man's words. I cannot easily remember what any man has said to me, but how can I forget what he is to me? We know each other better than we are aware. We are admitted to startling privacies with every person we meet.

March 29, 1853. . . . P. M. To the early willow behind Martial Miles's. . . . On the railroad I hear the telegraph. This is the lyre that is as old as the world. I put my ear to the post and the sound seems to be in its core directly against my ear. This is all of music. The utmost refinements of art, I think, can go no further. . . .

Walking along near the edge of the meadow under Lupine Hill, I slumped through the sod into a muskrat's nest, for there was only a thickness of two inches over it, which was enough when it was frozen. I laid it open with my hands. There were three or four channels or hollowed paths a rod or more in length, not merely worn but made in the meadow, centring at the mouth of this burrow. They were three or four inches deep, and finally became indistinct, and were lost amid the cranberry vines and grass toward the river. The entrance to the burrow was just at the edge of the upland, here a gentle sloping bank, and was probably

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just beneath the surface of the water six weeks ago. It was about twenty-five rods distant from the true bank of the river. From this a straight gallery about six inches in diameter every way sloped upward about eight feet into the bank just beneath the turf, so that the end was about a foot higher than the entrance. Here was a somewhat circular enlargement about one foot in horizontal diameter and of the same depth as the gallery. In it was nearly a peck of coarse meadow stubble, showing the marks of the scythe, with which was mixed accidentally a very little of the moss that grew with it. Three short galleries, only two feet long, were continued from this centre, somewhat like rays, toward the high land, as if they had been prepared in order to be ready for a sudden rise of the water, or had been actually made so far under such an emergency. The nest was of course thoroughly wet, and, humanly speaking, uncomfortable, though the creature could breathe in it. But it is plain that the muskrat cannot be subject to the toothache. I have no doubt this was made and used last winter, for the grass was as fresh as that in the meadow (except that it was pulled up), and the sand which had been taken out lay partly in a flattened heap in the meadow, and no grass had sprung up through it. In the course of the

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above examination I made a very interesting discovery. When I turned up the thin sod from over the damp cavity of the nest, I was surprised to see at this hour of a pleasant day what I took to be beautiful frost crystals of a rare form, frost bodkins I was in haste to name them, for around the fine white roots of the grass, apparently herd's-grass, which were from one to two or more inches long, reaching downward into the dark, damp cavern (though the grass blades had scarcely made so much growth above; indeed the growth was scarcely visible there), appeared to be lingering still into the middle of this warm afternoon rare and beautiful frost crystals exactly in the form of a bodkin, about one sixth of an inch wide at base, and tapering evenly to the lower end. Sometimes the upper part of the core was naked for half an inch, which gave them a slight resemblance to feathers, though they were not flat, but round. At the abrupt end of the rootlet (as if cut off) was a larger clear drop. On examining them more closely, feeling and tasting them, I found that it was not frost, but a clear crystalline dew in almost invisible drops, concentrated from the dampness of the cavern, perhaps melted frost, preserving by its fineness its original color, thus regularly arranged around the delicate white fibre. Looking again, in-

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credulous, I discerned extremely minute white threads or gossamer standing out on all sides from the main rootlet and affording the core for these drops. Yet on those fibres which had lost their dew, none of these minute threads appeared. . . . It impressed me as a wonderful piece of chemistry, that the very grass we trample on and esteem so cheap should be thus wonderfully nourished, that this spring greenness was not produced by coarse and cheap means, but that in the sod, out of sight, the most delicate and magical processes are going on. The half is not shown. . . . I brought home some tufts of the grass in my pocket, but when I took it out, I could not at first find those pearly white fibres and thought they were lost, for they were shrunk to dry brown threads, and as for the still finer gossamer which supported the roscid droplets, with few exceptions they were absolutely undiscoverable. They no longer stood out around the core, so delicate was their organization. It made me doubt almost if there were not actual, substantial, though invisible cores to the leaflets and veins of the hoar frost. Can these almost invisible and tender fibres penetrate the earth where there is no cavern? Or is what we call the solid earth porous and cavernous enough for them?

March 29, 1855. As I stand on Heywood's

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Peak looking over Walden, more than half its surface already sparkling blue water, I inhale with pleasure the cold but wholesome air, like a draught of cold water, contrasting it in my memory with the wind of summer, which I do not thus eagerly swallow. This, which is a chilling wind to my fellow, is decidedly refreshing to me. I swallow it with eagerness as a panacea. I feel an impulse also already to jump into the half-melted pond. This cold wind is refreshing to my palate as the warm air of sunshine is not, methinks.

March 29, 1858. . . . P. M. To Ball's Hill. . . . As I sit two thirds up the sunny side of Pine Hill, looking over the meadows, now almost completely bare, the crows, by their swift flight and scolding, reveal to me some large bird of prey hovering over the river. I perceive by its marking and size that it cannot be a hen-hawk, and now it settles on the topmost branch of a white maple, bending it down. Its great armed and feathered legs dangle helplessly in the air for a moment, as if feeling for the perch, while its body is tipping this way and that. It sits there facing me some forty or fifty rods off, pluming itself, but keeping a good lookout. At this distance and in this light it appears to have a rusty-brown head and breast, and is white beneath, with rusty leg feathers

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and a tail black beneath. When it flies again, it is principally black varied with white, regular light spots on its tail and wings beneath, but chiefly a conspicuous white space on the forward part of the neck. Also some of the upper side of the tail or tail-coverts is white. It has broad, ragged, buzzard-like wings. I think it must be an eagle (?). It lets itself down, with its legs somewhat helplessly dangling, as if feeling for something on the bare meadow, and then gradually flies away, soaring and circling higher and higher until lost in the downy clouds. This lofty soaring is at least a grand recreation, as if it were nourishing sublime ideas. I should like to know why it soars higher and higher so, whether its thoughts are really turned to earth, for it seems to be more nobly as well as highly employed than the laborers ditching in the meadows beneath, or any others of my fellow-townsmen.

With many men their fine manners are a lie all over, a skin coat or finish of falsehood. They are not brave enough to do without this sort of armor, which they wear night and day.

March 30, 1840. Pray, what things interest me at present? A long soaking rain, the drops trickling down the stubble, while I lay drenched on a last year's bed of wild oats by the side of some bare hill, ruminating. These things are

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of moment. To watch this crystal globe just sent from heaven to associate with me. While these clouds and this sombre drizzling weather shut all in, we two draw nearer and know one another. The gathering in of the clouds with the last rush and dying breath of the wind, and then the regular dripping of twigs and leaves the country over, give the impression of inward comfort and sociableness. The drenched stubble and trees that drop beads on you as you pass, their dim outline seen through the rain on all sides, drooping in sympathy with yourself, these are my undisputed territory, this is nature's English comfort. The birds draw closer and are more familiar under the thick foliage, composing new strains on their roosts against the sunshine.

March 30, 1841. I find my life growing slovenly when it does not exercise a constant supervision over itself. Its duds accumulate. Next to having lived a day well, is a clear and calm overlooking of all our days.

FRIENDSHIP.

Now we are partners in such legal trade,
We 'll look to the beginnings, not the ends,
Nor to pay-day, knowing true wealth is made
For current stock, and not for dividends.

March 30, 1853. Ah, those youthful days, are they never to return? when the walker does

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not too enviously observe particulars, but sees, hears, scents, tastes, and feels only himself, the phenomena that showed themselves in him, his expanding body, his intellect and heart. No worm or insect, quadruped or bird, confined his view, but the unbounded universe was his. A bird has now become a mote in his eye.

Dug into what I take to be a woodchuck's burrow in the low knoll below the cliffs. It was in the side of the hill, and sloped gently downward, at first diagonally into the hill about five feet, perhaps westerly, then turned and ran north about three feet, then northwest further into the hill four feet, then north again four feet, then northeast I know not how far, the last five feet, perhaps, ascending. It was the full length of the shovel from the surface of the ground to the bottom of the hole when I left off, owing, perhaps, to the rise of the hill. The hole was arched above and flat on the bottom like an oven, ∩ about five inches in diameter at the base. It seemed to have a pretty hard crust as I probed into it. There was a little enlargement, perhaps ten inches in diameter, in the angle at the end of twelve feet. It was thus,

It was a wonder where the sand was conveyed to, for there was not a wheelbarrow load at the entrance.

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March 30, 1854. . . . Read an interesting article on Etienne Geoffroy St. Hilaire, the friend and contemporary of Cuvier, though opposed to him in his philosophy. He believed species to be variable. In looking for anatomical resemblances he found that he could not safely be guided by function, form, structure, size, color, etc., but only by the relative position and mutual dependence of organs. Hence his "Le Principe des Connexions," and his maxim, "An organ is sooner destroyed than transposed," — "Un organ est plutôt altéré, atrophié, anéanti, que transposé." A principal formula of his was, "Unity of Plan, Unity of Composition." ("Westminster Review," January, 1854.)

March 30, 1855. . . . He must have a great deal of life in him to draw upon, who can pick up a subsistence in November and March. Man comes out of his winter quarters this month as lean as a woodchuck. Not till late could the skunk find a place where the ground was thawed on the surface. Except for science do not travel in such a climate as this in November and March. I tried if a fish would take the bait to-day, but in vain; I did not get a nibble. Where are they?

March 30, 1856. P. M. To Walden and Fair Haven. Still cold and blustering. I

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came out to see the sand and subsoil in the deep cut as I would to see a spring flower, some redness in the cheek of earth. . . . I go to Fair Haven *via* the Andromeda Swamps. The river is a foot and more in depth there still. There is a little bare ground in and next to the swampy woods at the head of Well Meadow, where the springs and little black rills are flowing. I see already one blade, three or four inches long, of that purple or lake grass, lying flat on some water between snow-clad banks, the first leaf with a rich bloom on it. How silent are the footsteps of spring! There, too, where there is a fraction of the meadow, two rods over, quite bare under the bank, in this warm recess at the head of the meadow, though the rest is covered with snow a foot or more in depth, I was surprised to see the skunk-cabbage, with its great spear-heads, open and ready to blossom, and the *Caltha palustris* bud, which shows yellowish, and the golden saxifrage green and abundant, all surrounded and hemmed in by snow which has covered the ground since Christmas, and stretches as far as you can see on every side. The spring advances in spite of snow and ice and cold even. The ground under the snow has long since felt the influence of the spring sun whose rays fell at a more favorable angle. The tufts or tussocks next the edge of

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the snow were crowned with dense phalanxes of spears of the stiff, triangularish sedge-grass five inches high, but quite yellow, with a very slight greenness at the tip, showing that they pushed up through the snow, and, though it had melted, had not yet acquired color. In warm recesses in meadows and clefts, in rocks in the midst of ice and snow, nay, even under the snow, vegetation commences and steadily advances.

March 30, 1858. P. M. To my boat at Cardinal Shore and thence to Lee's Cliff. . . . Landing at Bittern Cliff I went round through the woods to get sight of ducks on the pond. Creeping down through the woods I reached the rocks, and saw fifteen or twenty sheldrakes scattered about. The full-plumaged males, conspicuously black and white, and often swimming in pairs, appeared to be the most wary, keeping farthest out. Others, with much less white, and duller black, were very busily fishing just north of the inlet of the pond, where there is about three feet of water, and others still playing and preening themselves. These ducks, whose tame representatives are so sluggish and deliberate in their motions, were full of activity. A party of them fishing and playing is a very lively scene. On one side, for instance, you will see eight or ten busily diving and most of the time under water, not rising

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high when they come up, and soon plunging again. The whole surface will be in commotion, though no ducks are to be seen. I saw one come up with a large fish, whereupon all the rest, as they successively came to the surface, gave chase to it, while it held its prey over the water in its bill. They pursued it with a great rush and clatter a dozen or more rods over the surface, making a great furrow in the water, but there being some trees in the way I could not see the issue. I saw seven or eight all dive together, as with one consent, remaining under half a minute or more. On another side you see a party which seem to be playing and pluming themselves. They will swim rapidly and dive, and come up and dive again every three or four feet, occasionally one pursuing another, will flutter in the water, making it fly, or erect themselves at full length on the surface like a penguin, and flap their wings. This party make an incessant noise. Again, you will see some steadily tacking this way or that in the middle of the pond, and often they rest there asleep with their heads in their backs. They readily cross the pond, swimming from this side to that.

March 30, 1859. 6 A. M. To Hill (across water). Hear a red squirrel chirrup at me by the hemlocks. It is all for my benefit, not that

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he is excited by fear, I think, but so full is he of animal spirits that he makes a great ado about the least event. At first he scratches on the bark very rapidly with his hind feet, without moving the fore feet. He makes so many queer sounds, and so different from one another, that you would think they came from half a dozen creatures. I hear now two sounds from him of a very distinct character, a low or base inward, worming, screwing kind of sound (very like that, by the way, which an anxious partridge mother makes), and at the same time a very sharp and shrill bark, clear, and on a very high key, totally distinct from the last, while his tail is flashing incessantly. You might say that he successfully accomplished the difficult feat of singing and whistling at the same time.

P. M. To Walden *via* Hubbard's Close. . . . See on Walden two sheldrakes, male and female (as is common), so they have for some time paired. They are a hundred rods off, the male, the larger, with his black head and white breast; the female with a red head. With my glass I see the long red bills of both. They swim, at first one way near together, then tack and swim the other, looking around incessantly, never quite at their ease, wary and watchful for foes. A man cannot walk down to the shore,

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or stand out on a hill overlooking the pond, without disturbing them. They will have an eye upon him. The locomotive whistle makes every wild duck start that is floating within the limits of the town. I see that these ducks are not here for protection alone, for at last they both dive and remain beneath about forty pulse-beats, and again and again. I think they are looking for fishes. Perhaps, therefore, these divers are more likely to alight in Walden than the black ducks are. Hear the hovering note of a snipe.

March 31, 1842. I cannot forget the majesty of that bird at the Cliff. It was no sloop or smaller craft hove in sight, but a ship of the line, worthy to struggle with the elements. It was a great presence, as of the master of river and forest. His eye would not have quailed before the owner of the soil, none could challenge his rights. And then his retreat, sailing so steadily away, was a kind of advance. How is it that man always feels like an interloper in nature, as if he had intruded on the domains of bird and beast?

The really efficient laborer will be found not to crowd his day with work, but will saunter to his task surrounded by a wide halo of ease and leisure. There will be a wide margin for relaxation to his day. He is only earnest to secure

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the kernels of time, and does not exaggerate the value of the husk. Why should the hen sit all day? She can lay but one egg; and besides, she will not have picked up materials for a new one. Those who work much do not work hard.

Nothing is so rare as sense. Very uncommon sense is poetry, and has a heroic or sweet music. But in verse, for the most part, the music now runs before and now behind the sense, is not coincident with it. Given the metre, and one will make music while another makes sense. But good verse, like a good soldier, will make its own music, and it will march to the same with one consent. In most verse there is no inherent music. The man should not march, but walk like a citizen. . . . Lydgate's "Story of Thebes," intended for a Canterbury tale, is a specimen of most unprogressive, unmusical verse. Each line rings the knell of its brother as if it were introduced but to dispose of him. No mortal man could have breathed to that cadence without long intervals of relaxation. The repetition would have been fatal to the lungs. No doubt there was much healthy exercise taken in the mean while. He should forget his rhyme and tell his story, or forget his story and breathe himself. In Shakespeare and elsewhere the climax may be somewhere along the line which runs as varied

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and meandering as a country road; but in Lydgate it is nowhere but in the rhyme. The couplets slope headlong to their confluence.

March 31, 1852. Intended to get up early this morning and commence a series of spring walks, but clouds and drowsiness prevented. Early, however, I saw the clouds in the west, for my window looks that way, suffused with rosy light, but that flattery is all forgotten now. How can one help being an early riser and walker in that season when the birds begin to twitter and sing in the morning?

The expedition in search of Sir John Franklin, in 1850, landed at Cape Riley, on the north side of Lancaster Sound, and one vessel brought off relics of Franklin, *viz.*, "five pieces of beef, mutton, and pork bones, together with a bit of rope, a small rag of canvas, and a chip of wood cut by an axe." Richardson says: "From a careful examination of the beef bones, I came to the conclusion that they had belonged to pieces of salt beef ordinarily supplied to the navy, and that probably they and the other bones had been exposed to the atmosphere and friction in rivulets of melted snow for four or five summers. The rope was proved by the ropemaker who examined it to have been made at Chatham, of Hungarian hemp, subsequent to 1841. The fragment of canvas, which seemed

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to have been part of a boat's swab, had the Queen's broad arrow painted on it, and the chip of wood was of ash, a tree which does not grow on the banks of any river that falls into the Arctic sea. It had, however, been long exposed to the weather, and was likely to have been cut from a piece of drift timber found lying on the spot, as the mark of an axe was recent compared to the surface of the wood, which might have been exposed to the weather for a century." "The grounds of these conclusions were fully stated in a report made to the Admiralty by Sir Edward Parry, myself, and other officers." Is not here an instance of the civilized man's detecting the traces of a friend or foe with a skill at least equal to that of the savage? Indeed it is in both cases but a common sense applied to the objects, and in a manner most familiar to both parties. The skill of the savage is just such a science, though referred sometimes to instinct.

Perchance, as we grow old, we cease to spring with the spring, we are indifferent to the succession of years, and they go by without epoch as months. Woe be to us when we cease to form new resolutions on the opening of a new year.

It would be worth while to tell why a swamp pleases us, why a certain kind of weather

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pleases us, etc., analyze our impressions. Why does the moaning of the storm give me pleasure? Methinks because it puts to rout the trivialness of our fair-weather life, and gives it, at least, a tragic interest. The sound has the effect of a pleasing challenge to call forth our energy to resist the invaders of our life's territory. It is musical and thrilling as the sound of an enemy's bugle. Our spirits revive like lichens in a storm. There is something worth living for when we are resisted, threatened. As at the last day we might be thrilled with the prospect of the grandeur of our destiny, so in these first days our destiny appears grander. What would the days, what would our life, be worth, if some nights were not dark as pitch, of darkness tangible, that you can cut with a knife! How else could the light in the mind shine! How should we be conscious of the light of reason? If it were not for physical cold how should we have discovered the warmth of the affections. I sometimes feel that I need to sit in a far-away cave through a three weeks' storm, cold and wet, to give a tone to my system. The spring has its windy March to usher it in, with many soaking rains reaching into April.

Methinks I would share every creature's suffering for the sake of its experience and joy.

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The song-sparrow and the transient fox-colored sparrow, have they brought me no message this year? Is not the coming of the fox-colored sparrow something more earnest and significant than I have dreamed of? Have I heard what this tiny passenger has to say while it flits thus from tree to tree? Can I forgive myself if I let it go to Rupert's Land before I have appreciated it? God did not make this world in jest, no, nor in indifference. These migratory sparrows all bear messages that concern my life. I do not pluck the fruits in their season. I love the birds and beasts because they are mythologically in earnest. I see that the sparrow *cheeps*, and flits, and sings adequately to the great design of the universe; that man does not communicate with it, understand its language, because he is not at one with nature. I reproach myself because I have regarded with indifference the passage of the birds; I have thought them no better than I.

What philosopher can estimate the different values of a waking thought and a dream?

I hear late to-night the unspeakable rain mingled with rattling snow against the windows, preparing the ground for spring.

March 31, 1853. The robins sing at the very earliest dawn. I wake with their note ringing in my ear. 6 A. M. To Island by boat.

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. . . 9 A. M. To Lincoln, surveying for Mr. Austin. The catkins of the hazel are now trembling in the wind and much lengthened, showing yellowish and beginning to shed pollen. Saw and heard sing in a peach orchard my *warbling vireo* of the morning. It must be the fox-colored sparrow. It is plumper than a bluebird, tail fox-colored, a distinct spot on the breast, no bars visible on wings; beginning with a clear, rich, deliberate note, jingling more rapidly, much like the warbling vireo, at the end. I afterwards heard a fine concert of little songsters along the edge of the meadow; approached and watched and listened for more than half an hour. There were many little sparrows, difficult to detect, flitting and hopping along, and scratching the ground like hens under the alders, willows, and cornels, in a wet, leafy place, occasionally alighting and preening themselves. They had bright bay crowns, two rather distinct white bars on wings, an ashy breast, and dark tail. These twittered sweetly, in some parts very much like a canary, and many together, making the fullest and sweetest concert I have heard yet. Like a shopful of canaries. About the size of a song-sparrow. I think these are the tree-sparrow. Also mixed with them, and puzzling me to distinguish for a long time, were many of the fox-colored (?)

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sparrows mentioned above, with a creamy, cinnamon-tinged, ashy breast, cinnamon shoulderlet, and ashy about side-head and throat, with a fox-colored tail. A size larger than the others, the spot on breast very marked. Here were evidently two birds intimately mixed. Did not Peabody confound them when he mentioned the mark on the breast of the tree-sparrow? The rich strain of the fox-colored sparrow, as I think it, added much to the choir. The latter, solos, the former, in concert. I kept off a hawk by my presence. They were a long time invisible to me except when they flitted past. . . .

Mount Tabor. . . . It is affecting to see a distant mountain-top, like the summits of Uncannunuc, well seen from this hill, whereon you camped for a night in your youth, which you have never revisited, still as blue and ethereal to your eyes as is your memory of it. It lies like an isle in the far heavens, a part of earth unprofaned, which does not bear a price in the market, is not advertised by the real estate broker.

March 31, 1854. In criticising your writing, trust your finest instinct. There are many things which we come very near questioning, but do not question. When I have sent off my manuscripts to the printer, certain objectionable

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sentences or expressions are sure to obtrude themselves on my attention with force, though I had not consciously suspected them before. My critical instinct then at once breaks the ice and comes to the surface.

March 31, 1855. I see through the window that it is a very fine day, the first really warm one. I did not know the whole till I came out at 3 P. M. and walked to the Cliffs. The slight haze of yesterday has become very thick, with a southwest wind, concealing the mountains. I can see it in the air within two or three rods as I look against the bushes. The fuzzy gnats are in the air, and bluebirds whose warble is thawed out; I am uncomfortably warm, gradually unbutton both my coats, and wish that I had left the outside one at home. I go listening for the croak of the first frog or peep of a hylodes. It is suddenly warm, and this amelioration of the weather is incomparably the most important fact in this vicinity. It is incredible what a revolution in our feelings and in the aspect of nature this warmer air alone has produced. Yesterday the earth was simple to barrenness, and dead, bound out. Out of doors there was nothing but the wind and the withered grass, and the cold though sparkling blue water, and you were driven in upon yourself. Now, you would think there was a sudden awak-

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ening in the very crust of the earth, as if flowers were expanding and leaves putting forth; but not so. I listen in vain to hear a frog or a new bird as yet. Only the frozen ground is melting a little deeper, and the water is trickling from the hills in some places. No, the change is mainly in us. We feel as if we had obtained a new lease of life.

March 31, 1856. I see the scarlet tops of white maples nearly a mile off down the river, the lusty shoots of last year. Those of the red maple do not show thus. I see many little holes in the old and solid snow where leaves have sunk down gradually and perpendicularly eleven or twelve inches, the hole no larger at the top than at the bottom, nay, often partly closed at top by the drifting, and exactly the form and size of the leaf. It is as if the sun had driven this thin shield like a bullet thus deep into the solid snow.

March 31, 1857. A very pleasant day. Spent a part of it in the garden preparing to set out fruit trees. It is agreeable once more to put a spade into the warm mould. The victory is ours at last, for we remain and take possession of the field. In this climate, in which we do not commonly bury our dead in the winter on account of the frozen ground, and find ourselves exposed on a hard, bleak crust, the

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coming out of the frost, and the first turning up of the soil with a spade or plough, is an event of importance.

P. M. To Hill. As I ascend the east side of the hill I hear the distant faint *peep* of the hylodes, and the *tut tut* of the croaking frogs from the west. How gradually and imperceptibly the peep of the hylodes mingles with and swells the volume of sound which makes the voice of awakening nature! If you do not listen carefully for its first note you probably will not hear it; and not having heard that, your ears become used to the sound, so that you will hardly notice it at last, however loud and universal. I hear it now faintly from through and over the bare gray twigs and the sheeny needles of an oak and pine wood, and from over the russet fields beyond. It is so intimately mingled with the murmur or roar of the wind as to be well-nigh inseparable from it. It leaves such a lasting trace on the ear's memory that often I think I hear the peeping when I do not. It is a singularly emphatic and ear-piercing proclamation of animal life, when, with a very few and slight exceptions, vegetation is yet dormant. The dry croaking and *tut tut* of the frogs (a sound which ducks seem to imitate, a kind of *quacking*, and they are both of the water) is plainly enough down there in some pool in the

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woods. But the shrill peeping of the hylodes locates itself nowhere in particular. It seems to take its rise at an indefinite distance over wood and hill and pasture, from clefts or hollows, in the March wind. It is not so much of the earth, earthy, as of the air, airy. It rises at once on the wind and is at home there, and we are incapable of tracing it farther back. What an important part to us the little peeping hylodes acts, filling all our ears with sound in the spring afternoons and evenings, while the existence of the otter, our largest wild animal, is not betrayed to any of our senses, or at least not to more than one in a thousand.

An Irishman is digging a ditch for a foundation wall of a new shop where James Adams's shop stood. He tells me that he dug up three cannon balls just in the rear of the shop within a foot of each other and about eighteen inches beneath the surface. I saw one of them, which was about three and one half inches in diameter and somewhat eaten with rust on one side. These were probably thrown into the pond by the British on the 19th of April, 1775. Shattuck says that five hundred pounds of balls were thrown into the pond and wells. These may have been dropped out of the back window.

March 31, 1858. . . . I see about a dozen

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black ducks on Flint's Pond, asleep with their heads on their backs and drifting across the pond before the wind. I suspect that they are nocturnal in their habits and therefore require much rest by day. So do the seasons revolve, and every chink is filled. While the waves toss, this bright day, the ducks asleep are drifting before the wind across the ponds. Every now and then one or two lift their heads and look about as if they watched by turns. . . . Just after sundown I see a large flock of wild geese in a perfect harrow cleaving their way toward the northeast, with Napoleonic tactics splitting the forces of winter.

March 31, 1860. . . . The small red butterfly in the woodpaths and sproutlands, and I hear at mid P. M. a very faint but positive ringing sound rising above the susurrus of the pines, of the breeze, which I think is the note of a distant and perhaps solitary toad, not loud and ringing as it will be. Toward night I hear it more distinctly and am more confident about it. I hear this faint first reptilian sound added to the sound of the winds thus, each year a little in advance of the unquestionable note of the toad. Of constant sounds in the warmer parts of warm days there now begins to be added to the rustling or washing water-fall-like sound of the wind this faintest imaginable prelude of

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the toad. I often draw my companion's attention to it, and he fails to hear it at all, it is so slight a departure from the previous monotony of March. This morning you walked in the warm sproutland, the strong but warm southwest wind blowing, and you heard no sound but the dry and mechanical susurrus of the wood; now there is mingled with or added to it, to be detected only by the sharpest ears, this first and faintest imaginable voice. I heard this under Mount Misery. Probably the toads come forth earlier under the warm slopes of that hill. . . . At evening I hear the first real robin's song.

April 1, 1841.

ON THE SUN COMING OUT IN THE AFTERNOON.

Methinks all things have traveled since you shined,
But only Time and clouds, Time's team, have moved;
Again foul weather shall not change my mind,
But in the shade I will believe what in the sun I loved.

April 1, 1852. Walden is all white ice, but little melted about the shore. The very sight of it when I get so far on the causeway, though I hear the spring note of the chickadee from over the ice, carries my thoughts back at once some weeks toward winter, and a chill comes over them.

The mountains seen from Bare Hill are very fine now in the horizon, so evanescent, being broadly spotted white and blue like the skins of

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some animals, the white predominating. The Peterboro' Hills to the north are almost all white. The snow has melted more on the more southern mountains. With their white mantles, notwithstanding the alternating dark patches, they melt into the sky. Yet perhaps the white portions may be distinguished by the peculiar light of the sun shining on them.

I hear a robin singing in the woods south of Hosmer's, just before sunset. It is a sound associated with New England village life. It brings to my thoughts summer evenings when the children are playing in the yards before the doors, and their parents, conversing, sit at the open windows. It foretells all this now, before those summer hours are come.

As I come over the turnpike, the song-sparrow's jingle comes up from every part of the meadow, as native as the tinkling rills or the blossoms of the spiræa. Its *cheep* is like the sound of opening buds.

April 1, 1853. The rain rests on the downy leaves of the young mulleins in separate, irregular drops, from the irregularity and color looking like ice. The drops quite in the cup of the mullein have a peculiar translucent silveriness, apparently because while they are upheld by the wool the light is reflected which would otherwise be absorbed, as if they were cased in light.

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The fresh mullein leaves are pushing up amid the brown, unsightly wrecks of last fall, which strew the ground like old clothes. . . . That early willow by Miles's has been injured by the rain. The drops rest on the catkins as on the mullein. Though this began to open only day before yesterday, and was the earliest I could find, already I hear the well-known hum of a honey-bee, and one alights on it (also a fly or two), loads himself, circles round with a loud humming, and is off. Where the first willow catkin opens, there will be found the honey-bee also with it. He found this out as soon as I. The stamens have burst out on the side towards the top, like a sheaf of spears, thrust forth to encounter the sun, — so many spears as the garrison can spare, advanced into the summer. With this flower, so much more flower-like or noticeable than any yet, begins a new era in the flower season.

April 1, 1854. The tree-sparrows, hiemalis, and song-sparrows are particularly lively and musical in the yard this rainy and truly April day. The robin now begins to sing powerfully.

P. M. Up Assabet to Dodge's Brook; thence to Farmer's. April has begun like itself. It is warm and showery, while I sail away with a light southwest wind toward the rock. Sometimes the sun seems just ready to burst out, yet

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I know it will not. The meadow is becoming bare. It resounds with the sprayey notes of blackbirds. The birds sing this warm and showery day after a fortnight's cold (yesterday was wet, too), with a universal burst and flood of melody. Great flocks of hiemalis, etc., pass overhead like schools of fishes in the water, many abreast. The white-maple stamens are beginning to peep out from the wet and weather-beaten buds. The earliest alders are just ready to bloom, to show their yellow on the first decidedly warm and sunny day. The water is smooth at last, and dark. Ice no longer forms on the oars. It is pleasant to paddle under the dripping hemlocks this dark day. They make more of a wilderness impression than pines. The hiemalis is in the largest flocks of any at this season. You see them come drifting over a rising ground, just like snow-flakes before a northeast wind.

April 1, 1855. When I look out the window, I see that the grass on the bank on the south side of the house is already much greener than it was yesterday. As it cannot have grown so suddenly, how shall I account for it? I suspect the reason is that the few green blades are not merely washed bright by the rain, but erect themselves to imbibe its influence, and so are more prominent, while the withered blades are beaten down and flattened by it.

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April 1, 1858. I saw a squirrel's nest twenty-three or twenty-four feet high in a maple, and climbing to it (for it was so peculiar, having a basket-work of twigs about it, that I did not know but it was a hawk's nest) I found that it was a very perfect (probably) red squirrel's nest, made entirely of the now very dark or blackish green moss, such as grows on the button-bush and on the swampy ground, — a dense mass of it, about one foot through, wattled together, with an inobvious hole on the east side. A tuft of loose moss blowing up about it seemed to answer for a door or porch-covering. The cavity within was quite small, but very snug and warm, where one or two squirrels might lie warm in the severest storm, the dense moss walls being three inches thick or more. But what was most peculiar was that the nest, though placed over the centre of the tree, where it divided into four or five branches, was regularly and elaborately hedged about and supported by a basket-work of strong twigs stretched across from bough to bough; which twigs I perceived had been gnawed green from the maple itself, the stub ends remaining visible all around. . . .

April 2, 1852. 6 A. M. To the river-side and Merrick's pasture. The sun is up. The water in the meadows is perfectly smooth and

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placid, reflecting the hills and clouds and trees. The air is full of the notes of birds, song-sparrows, redwings, robins (singing a strain), bluebirds, and I hear also a lark, as if all the earth had burst forth into song. The influence of this April morning has reached them, for they live out-of-doors all the night, and there is no danger they will oversleep themselves such a morning. A few weeks ago, before the birds had come, there came to my mind in the night the twittering sound of birds in the early dawn of a spring morning, — a semi-prophecy of it, — and last night I attended mentally, as if I heard the spray-like dreaming sound of the mid-summer frog, and realized how glorious and full of revelations it was. The clouds are white, watery, not such as we had in the winter. I see in this fresh morning the shells left by the muskrats along the shore, and their galleries leading into the meadow, and the bright red cranberries washed up along the shore in the old water-mark. Suddenly there is a blur on the placid surface of the waters, a rippling mistiness, produced, as it were, by a slight morning breeze, and I should be sorry to show it to a stranger now. So is it with our minds.

How few valuable observations can we make in youth! What if there were united the susceptibility of youth with the discrimination of

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age! Once I was part and parcel of nature; now I am observant of her.

It appears to me that to one standing on the heights of philosophy mankind and the works of man will have sunk out of sight altogether; that man is altogether too much insisted on. The poet says the proper study of mankind is man. I say, study to forget all that; take wider views of the universe. That is the egotism of the race. What is this our childish, gossiping, social literature, mainly in the hands of the publishers? Another poet says, "The world is too much with us." He means, of course, that man is too much with us. In the promulgated views of man in institutions, in the common sense, there is narrowness and delusion. It is our weakness that so exaggerates the virtue of philanthropy and charity, and makes it the highest human attribute. The world will sooner or later tire of philanthropy, and all religion based on it mainly. They cannot long sustain my spirit. In order to avoid delusions, I would fain let man go by, and behold a universe in which man is but a grain of sand. I am sure that those of my thoughts which consist or are contemporaneous with social, personal connections, however humane, are not the wisest and widest, most universal. What is the village, city, State, nation, ay,

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the civilized world, that they should concern a man so much? The thought of them affects me in my wisest hours as when I pass a woodchuck's hole. It is a comfortable place to nestle in, no doubt, and we have friends — some sympathizing ones, it may be — and a hearth there; but I have only to get up at midnight, ay, to soar or wander a little in my thought by day, to find them all slumbering. Look at our literature; what a poor, puny, social thing, seeking sympathy! The author troubles himself about his readers, would fain have one before he dies. He stands too near his printer, he corrects the proofs. Not satisfied with defiling one another in this world, we would all go to heaven together. To be a good man (that is, a good neighbor in the widest sense) is but little more than to be a good citizen. Mankind is a gigantic institution; it is a community to which most men belong. It is a test I would apply to my companion. Can he forget man? Can he see the world slumbering? I do not value any view of the universe into which man and the institutions of man enter very largely and absorb much attention. Man is but the place where I stand, and the prospect hence is infinite. The universe is not a chamber of mirrors which reflect me when I reflect. I find that there is other than me. Man is a past phe-

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nomenon to philosophy; the universe is larger than enough for man's abode. Some rarely go outdoors; most are always at home at night; very few indeed have stayed out all night once in their lives; fewer still have gone behind the world of humanity, seen its institutions like toad-stools by the wayside.

April 2, 1853. The tree-sparrows and a few blue snow-birds in company sing (the former) very sweetly in the garden this morning. I now see a faint spot on the breast. It says something like a *twee, twee, chit chit, chit-chit-chee-var-r.*

The farmers are trembling for their poultry nowadays. I heard the screams of hens and a tumult among their mistresses (at Dugan's) calling them and scaring away the hawk yesterday. They say they do not lose by hawks in midsummer. White quotes Linnæus as saying of hawks, "Paciscuntur inducias cum avibus quamdiu cuculus cucullat," but White doubts it. . . . The song-sparrows, the three-spotted, away by the meadow-sides, are very shy and cunning: instead of flying, will frequently trot along the ground under the bushes, or dodge through a wall like a swallow; and I have observed that they generally bring some object, as a rail or branch, between themselves and the face of the walker, — often with outstretched

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necks will peep at him for five or ten minutes.

Heard and saw what I call the pine warbler, — *vetter, vetter, vetter, vetter, vet,* — the cool woodland sound. The first this year of the higher-colored birds, after the bluebird and the blackbird's wing, is it not? It affects me as something more tender.

We cannot well afford not to see the geese go over a single spring, and so commence our year regularly.

April 2, 1854. P. M. To Conantum *via* Nut Meadow Brook. Saw black ducks in water and on land. Can see their light throats a great way off with my glass. They do not dive, but dip. . . .

The radical leaves of some plants appear to have started, look brighter, — the shepherd's purse, and plainly the skunk-cabbage. In the brook there is the least possible springing yet, — a little yellow lily in the ditch, and sweet-flag starting. I was just sitting on the rail over the brook when I heard something which reminded me of the song of the robin in rainy days in past springs. Why is it that not the note itself, but something which reminds me of it, should affect me most? — the ideal instead of the actual. . . .

The tree-sparrows make the alders, etc., ring.

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They have a metallic chirp and a short canary-like warble. They keep company with the hiemalis.

April 2, 1855. Green is essentially vivid or the color of life, and it is therefore most brilliant when a plant is moist or most alive. . . . The word, according to Webster, is from the Saxon *grêne*, to grow, and hence is the color of herbage when growing.

April 2, 1856. It is evident that it depends on the character of the season whether this flower or that is the most forward, whether there is more or less snow, or cold, or rain, etc.

I am tempted to stretch myself on the bare ground above the Cliff, to feel its warmth on my back and smell the earth and the dry leaves. I see and hear flies and bees about. A large buff-edged butterfly flutters by along the edge of the Cliff, *Vanessa antiopa*. Though so little of the earth is bare, this frail creature has been warmed into life again. Here is the broken shell of one of those large white snails, *Helix albolabris*, on the top of the Cliff. I am rejoiced to find anything so pretty. I cannot but think it nobler, as it is rarer, to appreciate some beauty than to feel much sympathy with misfortune. The powers are kinder to me when they permit me to enjoy this beauty than if they were to express any amount of compassion for me. I could never excuse them that.

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April 2, 1858. At the spring on the west side of Fair Haven Hill I startle a striped snake. It is a large one, with a white stripe down the dorsal ridge between two black ones, and on each side the last a buff one, and blotchy brown sides, darker towards the tail. Beneath, greenish yellow. This snake generally has a pinkish cast. There is another, evidently of the same species, but not half so large, with its neck lying affectionately across the first. When seen by itself you might have thought of a distinct species. The dorsal line on this one is bright yellow, though not so bright as the lateral ones and the yellow about the head. Also, the black is more glossy, and this snake has no pink cast. No doubt on almost every such warm bank now you will find a snake lying out. They allowed me to lift their heads with a stick four or five inches without stirring, nor did they mind the flies that alighted on them, looking steadily at me without the slightest motion of head, body, or eyes, as if they were of marble; and as you looked back at them, you continually forgot that they were real, and not imaginary.

On the side of Fair Haven Hill I go looking for baywings, turning my glass to each sparrow on a rock or tree. At last I see one which flies up straight from a rock eighty or one hundred feet, and warbles a peculiar, long, and pleasant

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strain, after the manner of the sky-lark, methinks; and close by I see another, apparently a baywing (though I do not see the white on its tail), and it utters, while sitting, the same subdued, rather peculiar strain. . . .

It is not important that the poet should say some particular thing, but that he should speak in harmony with nature. The tone and pitch of his voice is the main thing.

It appears to me that the wisest philosophers I know are as foolish as Sancho Panza dreaming of his island. Considering the ends they propose and the obstructions in their path, they are even. One philosopher is feeble enough alone; but observe how each multiplies his difficulties, — by how many unnecessary links he allies himself to the existing state of things. He girds himself for his enterprise with fasting and prayer, and then, instead of pressing forward like a light-armed soldier, with the fewest possible hindrances, he at once hooks on to some immovable institution, and begins to sing and scratch gravel *towards* his objects. Why, it is as much as the strongest man can do decently to bury his friends and relations, without making a new world of it. But if the philosopher is as foolish as Sancho Panza, he is also as wise, and nothing so truly makes a thing so or so as thinking it so.

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April 2, 1859. As I go down the street just after sunset, I hear many snipe to-night. At this hour, that is, in the twilight, they make a hovering sound high in the air over the villages, and the inhabitants do not know what to refer it to. It is very easily imitated by a sort of shuddering with the breath. It reminds me of calmer nights. Hardly one in a hundred hears it, and perhaps not nearly so many know what creature makes it. Perhaps no one dreamed of snipe an hour ago, and the air seemed empty of such as they; but as soon as the dusk begins, so that a bird's flight is concealed, you hear this peculiar, spirit-suggesting sound, now far, now near, heard through and above the evening din of the village. I did not hear one when I returned up the street half an hour later.

April 3, 1841. Friends will not only live in harmony, but in melody.

April 3, 1842. I can remember when I was more enriched by a few cheap rays of light falling on the pond side than by this broad sunny day. Riches have wings, indeed. The weight of present woe will express the sweetness of past experience. When sorrow comes, how easy it is to remember pleasure! When in winter the bees cannot make new honey, they consume the old.

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Experience is in the head and fingers. The heart is inexperienced.

I have just heard the flicker among the oaks on the hillside ushering in a new dynasty. It is the age and youth of time. Why did nature set this lure for sickly mortals? Eternity could not begin with more security and momentousness than the spring. The summer's eternity is reëstablished by this note. All sights and sounds are seen and heard both in time and eternity; and when the eternity of any sight or sound strikes the eye or ear, they are intoxicated with delight.

Sometimes, as through a dim haze, we see objects in their eternal relations. They stand like Stonehenge and the Pyramids, and we wonder who set them up, and what for.

The destiny of the soul can never be studied by the reason, for the modes of the latter are not ecstatic. In the wisest calculation or demonstration I but play a game with myself. I am not to be taken captive by myself. I cannot convince myself. God must convince. I can calculate a problem in arithmetic, but not any morality. Virtue is incalculable, as it is inestimable. Man's destiny is but virtue or manhood. It is wholly moral, to be learned only by the life of the soul. The reason, before it can be applied to such a subject, will have to

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fetter and restrict it. How can he, step by step, perform that long journey who has not conceived whither he is bound? How can he expect to perform an arduous journey without interruption who has no passport to the end? On this side of man is the actual, and on the other the ideal. The former is the province of the reason, which is even a divine light when directed upon that, but it cannot reach forward into the ideal without blindness. The moon was made to rule by night, but the sun to rule by day. Reason will be but a pale cloud like the moon when one ray of divine light comes to illumine the soul.

April 3, 1852. They call that northernmost sea, thought to be free from ice, "Polina." The coldest natures, persevere with them, go far enough, are found to have open sea in the highest latitudes.

April 3, 1853. Nothing is more saddening than an ineffectual, proud intercourse with those of whom we expect sympathy and encouragement. I repeatedly find myself drawn toward certain persons but to be disappointed. No concessions which are not radical are the least satisfaction. By myself I can live and thrive, but in the society of incompatible friends I starve. To cultivate their society is to cherish a sore which can only be healed by abandoning

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them. I cannot trust my neighbor whom I know any more than I can trust the law of gravitation and jump off the Cliffs.

The last two Tribunes I have not looked at. I have no time to read newspapers. If you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events which make the news transpire, — thinner than the paper on which it is printed, — then these things will fill the world for you. But if you soar above or dive below that plane, you cannot remember nor be reminded of them.

P. M. To Cliffs. At Hayden's I hear hylas on two keys or notes. Heard one after the other; the sounds might be mistaken for the varied note of one. The little croakers, too, are very lively there. I get close to them, and witness a great commotion, they half hopping and half swimming about with their heads out, apparently in pursuit of each other, perhaps thirty or forty within a few square yards, and fifteen or twenty within one yard. There is not only the incessant lively croaking of many together, as usually heard, but a lower, hoarser, squirming kind of croak, perhaps from the other sex. As I approach nearer, they disperse and bury themselves in the grass at the bottom, only one or two remaining outstretched upon the surface; and at another step, these, too, conceal themselves.

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April 3, 1856. P. M. To Hunt's Bridge. It is surprising how the earth on south banks begins to show some greenness in its russet cheeks in this rain and fog, — a precious emerald-green tinge, almost like a green mildew, the growth of the night, a green blush suffusing her cheek, heralded by twittering birds. This sight is no less interesting than the corresponding bloom and ripe blush of the fall. How encouraging to perceive again that faint tinge of green spreading amid the russet on earth's cheeks! I revive with Nature. Her victory is mine. This is my jewelry.

I see small flocks of robins running on the bared portions of the meadow; hear the sprayey tinkle of the song-sparrow along the hedges. Hear also the squeaking notes of an advancing flock of redwings or grackles (am uncertain which make that sound), somewhere high in the sky. At length detect them high overhead, advancing northeast in loose array, with broad, extended front, competing with each other, winging their way to some northern meadow which they remember. The note of some is like the squeaking of many signs, while others accompany them with a steady, dry *tchuk-tchuk*.

Hosmer is overhauling a vast heap of manure in the rear of his barn, turning the ice within it up to the light. Yet he asks despairingly

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what life is for, and says he does not expect to stay here long. But I have just come from reading Columella, who describes the same kind of spring look in that, to him, new spring of the world with hope, and I suggest to be brave and hopeful with nature. Human life may be transitory and full of trouble, but the perennial mind whose survey extends from that spring to this, from Columella to Hosmer, is superior to change. I will identify myself with that which did not die with Columella and will not die with Hosmer.

Coming home along the causeway, I hear a robin sing (though faintly) as in May. The road is a path, here and there shoveled through drifts which are considerably higher than a man's head on each side.

April 3, 1858. Going down town this morning, I am surprised by the rich strain of the purple finch from the elms. Three or four have arrived and lodged against the elms of our street, which runs east and west across their course, and they are now mingling their loud, rich strain with that of the tree-sparrows, robins, bluebirds, etc. The hearing of this note implies some improvement in the acoustics of the air. It reminds me of that genial state of the air when the elms are in bloom. They sit still over the street, and make a business of warbling. They advertise one, surely, of some

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additional warmth and serenity. How their note rings over the roofs of the village! You wonder that even the sleepers are not awakened by it, to inquire who is there. And yet probably not another in all the town observes their coming, and not half a dozen ever distinguish them in their lives. But the very mob of the town know the hard names of Germanians or Swiss families who once sang here or elsewhere.

When I have been out thus the whole day, and spend the whole afternoon returning, it seems to me pitiful and ineffectual to be out, as usual, only in the afternoon, — as if you had come late to a feast, after your betters had done. The afternoon seems at best a long twilight after the fresh and bright forenoon.

The gregariousness of men is their most contemptible and discouraging aspect. See how they follow each other like sheep, not knowing why! Day & Martin's blacking was preferred by the last generation, and also is by this. They have not so good a reason for preferring this or that religion. Apparently, in ancient times several parties were nearly equally matched. They appointed a committee and made a compromise, agreeing to vote or believe so and so, and they still helplessly abide by that. Men are the inveterate foes of all im-

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provement. Generally speaking, they think more of their hen-houses than of any desirable heaven. If you aspire to anything better than politics, expect no coöperation from men. They will not further anything good. You must prevail of your own force, as a plant springs and grows by its own vitality.

April 3, 1859. The bæomyces is in perfection this rainy day. I have for some weeks been insisting on the beauty and richness of the moist and saturated crust of the earth. It has seemed to me more attractive and living than ever, a very sensitive cuticle, teeming with life, especially in the rainy days. I have looked on it as the skin of a pard. And on a more close examination I am borne out by discovering in this now so bright bæomyces, and in other earthy lichens, and in cladonias, and also in the very pretty red and yellow stemmed mosses, a manifest sympathy with and an expression of the general life of the crust. This early and hardy cryptogamous vegetation is, as it were, a flowering of the crust of the earth. Lichens and these mosses which depend on moisture are now most rampant. If you examine it, this brown earth crust is not dead. We need a popular name for the bæomyces. C—— suggests "pink mould." Perhaps "pink shot or eggs" would do. . . .

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Men's minds run so much on work and money that the mass instantly associate all literary labor with a pecuniary reward. They are vainly curious to know how much money the lecturer or author gets for his work. They think that the naturalist takes so much pains to collect plants or animals because he is paid for it. An Irishman who saw me in the fields making a minute in my note-book took it for granted that I was casting up my wages, and actually inquired what they came to, as if he had never dreamed of any other use for writing. I might have quoted to him that the wages of sin is death, as the most pertinent answer. What do you get for lecturing now? I am occasionally asked. It is the more amusing, since I only lecture about once a year out of my native town, often not at all; so that I might, if my objects were merely pecuniary, give up the business. Once, when I was walking in Staten Island, looking about me, as usual, a man who saw me would not believe me when I told him that I was indeed from New England, but was not looking at that region with a pecuniary view, — a view to speculation; and he offered me a handsome bonus if I would sell his farm for him.

April 4, 1839. The atmosphere of morning gives a healthy hue to our prospects. Disease

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is a sluggard that overtakes, never encounters us. We have the start each day, and may fairly distance him before the dew is off; but if we recline in the bowers of noon, he will, after all, come up with us. The morning dew breeds no cold. We enjoy a diurnal reprieve in the beginning of each day's creation. In the morning we do not believe in expediency; we will start afresh, and have no patching, no temporary fixtures. In the afternoon man has an interest in the past; his eye is divided, and he sees indifferently well either way.

Drifting in a sultry day on the sluggish waters of the pond, I almost cease to live, and begin to be. A boatman stretched on the deck of his craft, and dallying with the noon, would be as apt an emblem of eternity for me as the serpent with his tail in his mouth. I am never so prone to lose my identity. I am dissolved in the haze.

April 4, 1841. The rattling of the tea-kettle below stairs reminds me of the cow-bells I used to hear when berrying in the Great Fields many years ago, sounding distant and deep amid the birches. That cheap piece of tinkling brass which the farmer hangs about his cow's neck has been more to me than the tons of metal which are swung in the belfry.

April 4, 1852. It is refreshing to stand on

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the face of the Cliff and see the water gliding over the surface of the almost perpendicular rock in a broad, thin sheet, pulsing over it. It reflects the sun for half a mile like a patch of snow. As you stand close by, it brings out the colors of the lichens like polishing or varnish. It is admirable regarded as a dripping fountain. You have lichens and moss on the surface, and starting saxifrage, ferns still green, and huckleberry bushes in the crevices. The rocks never appear so diversified and cracked, as if the chemistry of nature were now in full force. Then the drops falling perpendicularly from a projecting rock have a pleasing geometrical effect.

I see the snow lying thick on the south side of the Peterboro' Hills, and, though the ground is bare from the seashore to their base, I presume it is covered with snow from their base to the icy sea. I feel the northwest air, cooled by the snow, on my cheek. Those hills are probably the dividing line at present between the bare ground and the snow-clad ground stretching three thousand miles to the Saskatchewan and Mackenzie, and the icy sea.

April 4, 1853. P. M. Rain, rain. To Clematis Brook *via* Lee's Bridge. Again I notice that early reddish or purplish grass that lies flat on the pools, like a warm blush suffusing the

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youthful face of the year. A warm, dripping rain heard on one's umbrella as on a snug roof, and on the leaves without, suggests comfort. We go abroad with a slow but sure contentment, like turtles under their shells. We never feel so comfortable as when we are abroad in a storm with satisfaction. Our comfort is positive then. We are all compact, and our thoughts collected. We walk under the clouds and mists as under a roof. Now we seem to hear the ground a-soaking up the rain, which does not fall ineffectually, as on a frozen surface. We too are penetrated and revived by it. Robins still sing, and song-sparrows more or less, and blackbirds, and the unfailing jay screams. How the thirsty grass rejoices! It has pushed up visibly since morning, and fields that were completely russet yesterday are already tinged with green. We rejoice with the grass. I hear the hollow sound of drops falling into the water under Hubbard's Bridge, and each one makes a conspicuous bubble which is floated down stream. Instead of ripples, there are a myriad dimples in the stream. The lichens remember the sea to-day; the usually dry cladonias which are so crisp under the feet are full of moist vigor. The rocks speak, and tell the tales inscribed on them. Their inscriptions are brought out. I pause to study their geography. At Conantum

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End I saw a red-tailed hawk launch himself away from an oak by the pond at my approach, — a heavy flyer, flapping even like the great bittern at first. Heavy forward. After turning Lee's Cliff, I heard, methought, more birds singing even than in fair weather, — tree-sparrows, whose song has the character of the canary's, *Fringilla hiemalis* (chill-till), the sweet strains of the fox-colored sparrow, song-sparrows, a nuthatch, jays, crows, bluebirds, robins, and a large congregation of blackbirds. They suddenly alight with great din in a stubble field just over the wall, not perceiving me and my umbrella behind the pitch-pines, and there feed silently. Then, getting uneasy or anxious, they fly up on to an apple-tree, where, being reassured, commences a rich but deafening concert, — *o-gurgle-ee-e, o-gurgle-ee-e,* — some of the most liquid notes ever heard, as if produced by some of the water of the Pierian spring flowing through a kind of musical water pipe, and at the same time setting in motion a multitude of fine vibrating metallic springs. Like a shepherd merely meditating most enrapturing glees on such a water pipe. A more liquid bagpipe or clarinet, immersed like bubbles in a thousand sprayey notes, the bubbles half lost in the spray. When I show myself, away they go with a loud, harsh *charr-charr-r.* At first I had

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heard an inundation of blackbirds approaching, some beating time with a loud *chuck-chuck*, while the rest played a hurried, gurgling fugue.

A rainy day is to the walker in solitude and retirement like the night. Few travelers are about, and they half hidden under umbrellas and confined to the highways. The thoughts run in a different channel from usual. It is somewhat like the dark day, it is a light night. How cheerful the roar of a brook swollen by the rain, especially if there is no sound of the mill in it! A woodcock went off from the shore of Clematis or Nightshade Pond with a few slight, rapid sounds like a watchman's rattle half revolved.

April 4, 1855. P. M. To Clematis Brook *via* Lee's. A pleasant day; growing warmer; a slight haze. Now the hedges and apple-trees are alive with fox-colored sparrows all over the town, and their imperfect strains are occasionally heard.

It is a fine air, but more than tempered by the snow in the northwest. All the earth is bright; the very pines glisten, and the water is a bright blue. A gull is circling round Fair Haven Pond, seen white against the woods and hillsides, looking as if it would dive for a fish every moment, and occasionally resting on the ice. The water above Lee's Bridge is all alive

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with ducks. There are many flocks of eight or ten together, their black heads and white breasts seen above the water, — more of them than I have seen before this season, — and a gull with its whole body above the water, perhaps standing where it is shallow.

Not only are the evergreens brighter, but the pools, as that upland one behind Lee's, the ice as well as snow about their edges being completely melted, have a peculiarly warm and bright April look, as if ready to be inhabited by frogs. . . .

Returning from Mount Misery, the pond and river each presented a fine warm view. The slight haze which, in a warmer day at this season, softens the rough surface which the winter has left, and fills the copses seemingly with life, made the landscape remarkably fair. There is a remarkable variety in the view at present from this summit. The sun feels as warm as in June on my ear. Half a mile off, in front, is this elysian water, high over which two wild ducks are winging their rapid flight eastward through the bright air. On each side and beyond, the earth is clad with a warm russet, more pleasing perhaps than green; and far beyond all, in the northwest horizon, my eye rests on a range of snow-covered mountains glistening in the sun.

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April 4, 1860. The birds are eager to sing as the flowers to bloom, after raw weather has held them in check.

April 5, 1841. This long series of desultory mornings does not tarnish the brightness of the prospective days. Surely faith is not dead. Wood, water, earth, air are essentially what they are. Only society has degenerated. This lament for a golden age is only a lament for golden men.

April 5, 1854. This morning heard a familiar twittering over the house; looked up and saw white-bellied swallows. Another saw them yesterday. Surveying all day. In Carlisle. I have taken off my outside coat, perhaps for the first time, and hung it on a tree. The zephyr is positively agreeable on my cheek. I am thinking what an elysian day it is, and how I seem always to be keeping the flocks of Admetus such days, that is my luck, when I hear a single short stertorous croak from some pool half filled with dry leaves. You may see anything now, — the buff-edged butterfly and many hawks along the meadow; and hark! while I was writing down that field note, the shrill *peep* of the hylodes was borne to me from afar through the woods.

I rode with my employer a dozen miles today, keeping a profound silence almost all the

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way, as the most simple and natural course. I treated him simply as if he had bronchitis and could not speak, just as I would a sick man, a crazy man, or an idiot. The disease was only an unconquerable stiffness in a well-meaning and sensible man.

Begin to look off the hills and see the landscape again through a slight haze, with warm wind on the cheek.

April 5, 1855. 9 A. M. To Sudbury line by boat. . . . It is a smooth April-morning water, and many sportsmen are out in their boats. I see a pleasure boat on the smooth surface away by the Rock, resting lightly as a feather in the air. Scare up a snipe close to the water's edge, and soon after a hen-hawk from the Clam-shell oaks. The last looks larger on his perch than flying. The snipe, too, then, like crows, robins, blackbirds, and hens, is found near the water-side where is the first spring (alders, white maples, etc., etc.); and there, too, especially, are heard the song and tree sparrows and pewees; and even the hen-hawk, at this season, haunts these for his prey. Inland, the groves are almost completely silent as yet. The concert of song and tree sparrows at Willow Row is now very full, and their different notes are completely mingled. See a single white-bellied swallow dashing over

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the river. He, too, is attracted by the early insects that begin to be seen over the water. It being Fast Day, we on the water hear the loud and musical sound of bells ringing for church in the surrounding towns.

April 6, 1853. 6 A. M. To Cliffs. The robin is the singer at present, such is its power and universality, being heard both in garden and wood. Morning and evening he does not fail, perched on some elm or the like, and in rainy days it is one long morning or evening. The song-sparrow is still more universal, but not so powerful. The lark, too, is equally constant morning and evening, but confined to certain localities, as is the blackbird to some extent. The bluebird, with feebler but not less sweet warbling, helps fill the air, and the phœbe does her part. The tree-sparrow, *Fringilla hiemalis*, and fox-colored sparrows make the meadow-sides or gardens where they are flitting vocal, the first with its canary-like twittering, the second with its lively ringing trills or jingle. The third is a very sweet and more powerful singer, which would be memorable if we heard him long enough. The woodpecker's tapping, though not musical, suggests pleasant associations in the cool morning, is inspiriting, enlivening. I hear no hylas nor croakers in the morning. Is it too cool for

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them? The gray branches of the oaks, which have lost still more of their leaves, seen against the pines when the sun is rising and falling on them, how rich and interesting! Hear the faint, swelling, far-off beat of a partridge.

P. M. To Second Division Brook. . . . All along on the south side of this [Clam-shell] hill, on the edge of the meadow, the air resounds with the hum of honey-bees, attracted by the flower of the skunk-cabbage. I first heard the fine, peculiarly sharp hum of the honey-bee before I thought of them. Some hummed hollowly within the spathe, perchance to give notice to their fellows that the plant was occupied, for they repeatedly looked in and backed out on finding another. It was surprising to see them directed by their instincts to these localities (while the earth has still but a wintry aspect, so far as vegetation is concerned), buzz around some obscure spathe close to the ground, well knowing what they are about, then alight and enter. As the plants were very numerous for thirty or forty rods, there must have been some hundreds, at least, of bees there at once. I watched many when they entered and came out, and they all had little yellow pellets of pollen at their thighs. As the skunk-cabbage comes out before the willow, it is probable that the former is the first flower they visit. It is

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the more surprising, as the flower is, for the most part, invisible within the spathe. Some of these spathes are now quite large and twisted up like cows' horns, not curved over, as usual. Commonly they make a pretty little crypt or shrine for the flower. Lucky that this flower does not flavor their honey.

One cowslip, though it shows the yellow, is not fairly out, but will be by to-morrow. How they improve their time. Not a moment of sunshine is lost. One thing I may depend on, there has been no idling with the flowers. Nature loses not a moment, takes no vacation. They advance as steadily as a clock. These plants, now protected by the water, are just peeping forth. I should not be surprised to find that they drew in their heads in a frosty night.

Returning. Saw a pigeon woodpecker flash away, showing the rich golden underside of its glancing wings and the large whitish spot on its back, and presently I heard its familiar, long-repeated, loud note, almost as familiar as that of a barn-door fowl, which it somewhat resembles. The robins, too, now toward sunset, perched on the old apple-trees in Tarbel's orchard, twirl forth their evening lays unweariedly. . . . To-night, for the first time, I hear the hylas in full blast.

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April 6, 1854. A still warmer day than yesterday, a warm, moist, rain-smelling, west wind. I am surprised to find so much of the white maples already out. The light-colored stamens show some rods. Probably they began as early as day before yesterday. They resound with the hum of honey-bees heard a dozen rods off, and you see thousands of them about the flowers against the sky. They know where to look for the white maple, and when. Their susurrus carries me forward some months toward summer. I was reminded before of those still, warm, summer noons when the breams' nests are left dry, and the fishes retreat from the shallows into the cooler depths, and the cows stand up to their bellies in the rivers. . . . The alders, both kinds, just above the hemlocks, have just begun to shed their pollen. They are hardly as forward as the white maples, but they are not in so warm a position as some. . . . In clearing out the Assabet spring, disturbed two small speckled (palustris) frogs, just beginning to move. . . . Heard the snipe over the meadows this evening. Probably was to be heard for a night or two. Sounds on different keys, as if approaching or receding over the meadows recently become bare.

April 6, 1855. . . . I go up the Assabet in my boat. The blackbirds have now begun to

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frequent the water's edge in the meadow, the ice being sufficiently out. The aspect of April waters, smooth and commonly high, before many flowers (none yet) or any leafing, while the landscape is still russet, and frogs are just awakening, is peculiar. It began yesterday. A very few white-maple stamens stand out already loosely enough to blow in the wind, and some alder catkins look almost ready to shed pollen. On the hillsides I smell the dried leaves, and hear a few flies buzzing over them. The banks of the river are alive with song-sparrows and tree-sparrows. They now sing in advance of vegetation, as the flowers will blossom. Those slight tinkling, twittering sounds, called the singing of birds, have come to enliven the bare twigs before the buds show any signs of starting. . . . You can hear all day, from time to time, in any part of the village, the sound of a gun fired at ducks. Yesterday I was wishing that I could find a dead duck floating in the water, as I had found muskrats and a hare, and now I see something bright and reflecting the light from the edge of the alders five or six rods off. Can it be a duck? I can hardly believe my eyes. I am near enough to see its green head and neck. I am delighted to find a perfect specimen of the *Mergus merganser*, or goosander, undoubtedly shot yester-

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day by the Fast Day sportsmen. I take a small flattened shot from its wing, flattened against the wing bone, apparently. The wing is broken, and it is shot through the head. It is a perfectly fresh and very beautiful bird. As I raise it, I get sight of its long, slender vermilion bill (color of red sealing-wax), and its clean, bright orange legs and feet, and then of its perfectly smooth and spotlessly pure white breast and belly, tinged with a faint salmon, or a delicate buff inclining to salmon. . . . I afterwards took three small shot from it which were flattened against the bill's base and perhaps the quills' shafts. This, according to Wilson, is one of the mergansers or fisher-ducks, of which there are nine or ten species, and we have four in America. It is the largest of these four, . . . called water pheasant, sheldrake, fisherman diver, etc., as well as goosander. . . . My bird is twenty-five and seven eighths inches long and thirty-five in alar extent. From point of wing to end of primaries, eleven inches. It is a great diver, and does not mind the cold. It appears admirably adapted for diving and swimming. Its body is flat, and its tail short, flat, compact, and wedge-shaped. Its eyes peer out from a slight slit or semicircle in the skin of the head, and its legs are flat and thin in one direction, and the toes shut up com-

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pactly so as to create the least friction when drawing them forward, but their broad webs spread three inches and a half when they take a stroke. The web is extended three eighths of an inch beyond the inner toe of each foot. There are very conspicuous black teeth, like serrations, along the edges of its bill, and this also is roughened, so that it may hold its prey securely. The breast appeared quite dry when I raised it from the water. The head and neck are, as Wilson says, black, glossed with green, but the lower part of the neck pure white, and these colors bound on each other so abruptly that one appears to be sewed on to the other. It is a perfect wedge from the middle of its body to the end of its tail, is only three and one fourth inches deep from back to breast at the thickest part, while the greatest breadth horizontally (at the base of the legs) is five inches and a half. I suspect that I have seen near one hundred of these birds this spring, but I never got so near one before. . . . Yarrell says it is the largest of the British mergansers, is a winter visitor, though a few breed in the north of Britain; are rare in the southern counties.

April 7, 1839. The tediousness and detail of execution never occur to the genius projecting; it always antedates the completion of its work. It condescends to give time a few hours to do its bidding in.

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Most have sufficient contempt for what is mean to resolve that they will abstain from it, and a few, virtue enough to abide by their resolution, but not often does one attain to such lofty contempt as to require no resolution to be made.

April 7, 1841. My life will wait for nobody, but is being matured still irresistibly while I go about the streets, and chaffer with this man and that to secure it a living. It will cut its own channel, like the mountain stream, which, by the longest ridges and by level prairies, is not kept from the sea finally. So flows a man's life, and will reach the sea water, if not by an earthly channel, yet in dew and rain, overleaping all barriers, with rainbows to announce its victory. It can wind as cunningly and unerringly as water that seeks its level, and shall I complain if the gods make it meander? This staying to buy me a farm is as if the Mississippi should stop to chaffer with a clam-shell.

> If from your price ye will not swerve,
> Why then I 'll think the gods reserve
> A greater bargain there above,
> Out of their superabundant love
> Have meantime better for me cared,
> And so will get my stock prepared,
> And sow my seed broadcast in air,
> Certain to reap my harvest there.

April 7, 1853. 10 A. M. Down the river

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in boat to Bedford. . . . How handsome the river from those hills, southwest over the Great Meadows, a sheet of sparkling, molten silver, with broad lagoons parted from it by curving lines of low bushes; to the right or northward, now at 2 or 3 P. M., a dark blue, with small, smooth, light edgings, firm plating, under the lee of the shore. . . . As we stand on Nawshawtuck at 5 P. M., looking over the meadows, I doubt if there is a town more adorned by its river than ours. Now, while the sun is low in the west, the northeasterly water is of a peculiarly ethereal, light blue, more beautiful than the sky, and this broad water, with innumerable bays and inlets running up into the land on either side, and often divided by bridges and causeways, as if it were the very essence and richness of the heavens distilled and poured upon the earth, contrasting with the clear russet land and the paler sky from which it has been subtracted; nothing can be more elysian. Is not the blue more ethereal when the sun is at this angle? The river is but a long chain of flooded meadows. I think our most distant, extensive low horizon must be that northeast from this hill over Ball's Hill. It is down the river valley partly, at least, toward the Merrimack, as it should be.

April 7, 1854. 6 A. M. Down railroad to

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Cliffs. The *Populus tremuloides* in a day or two. The hazel stigmas are well out and the catkins loose, but no pollen shed yet. On the Cliff I find, after long and careful search, one sedge above the rocks, low amid the withered blades of last year, out, its little yellow beard amid the dry blades and a few green ones, the first herbaceous flowering I have detected. Fair Haven is completely open.

April 7, 1855. At six this morning to Clam-shell. . . . See thirty or forty goldfinches in a dashing flock, in all respects, notes and all, like lesser redpolls. On the trees . . . and on the railroad bank there is a general twittering and an occasional mew. Then they alight on the ground to feed, along with the *Fringilla hiemalis* and fox-colored sparrows. They are merely olivaceous above, dark about the base of the bill, but bright lemon-yellow in a semicircle on the breast, black wings and tail, with white bar on wings and white vanes to tail. I never saw them here so early before, or probably one or two olivaceous birds I have seen and heard of in other years were this.

April 7, 1860. The purple finch (if not before). This is the *Rana halecina* day, awakening of the meadows, though not very warm. The thermometer in Boston is said to be 49°+. Probably, then, when it is about 50°+ at this

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season, the river being low, they are to be heard in calm places. Fishes now lie up abundantly in shallow water in the sun; pickerel, and I see several bream. What was lately motionless and lifeless ice is a transparent liquid, in which the stately pickerel moves along. A novel sight is that of the first bream that has come forth from I know not what hibernaculum, moving gently over the still, brown river bottom where scarcely a weed has started. Water is as yet only melted ice, or like that of November, which is ready to become ice.

April 8, 1840. How shall I help myself? By withdrawing into the garret and associating with spiders and mice, determining to meet myself face to face sooner or later. Completely silent and attentive I will be this hour and the next and forever. The most positive life that history notices has been a constant retiring out of life, a wiping one's hands of it, seeing how mean it is, and having nothing to do with it.

April 8, 1841. Friends are the ancient and honorable of the earth. The oldest men did not begin friendship. It is older than Hindostan and the Chinese Empire. How long has it been cultivated, and still it is the staple article. It is a divine league struck forever. Warm days only bring it out to the surface.

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There is a friendliness between the sun and the earth in pleasant weather. The gray content of the land is its color.

You can tell what another's suspicions are by what you feel forced to become. You will wear a new character, like a strange habit, in his presence.

April 8, 1852. . . . I notice the alder in blossom, its reddish-brown catkins now lengthened and loose. What mean the apparently younger small red (catkins?)? They are the female aments.

April 8, 1853. . . . Saw and heard my small pine warbler shaking out his trills or jingle, even like money coming to its bearing. They appear so much the smaller from perching high in the tops of white pines, and flitting from tree to tree at that height. Is not my night warbler the white-eyed vireo? not yet here.

April 8, 1854. . . . At Nut Meadow Brook saw, or rather heard, a muskrat plunge into the brook before me, and saw him endeavoring in vain to bury himself in the sandy bottom, looking like an amphibious animal. I stooped and, taking him by the tail, which projected, tossed him ashore. He did not lose the points of the compass, but turned directly to the brook again, though it was toward me, and, plunging in,

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buried himself in the mud, and that was the last I saw of him. Saw a large bird sail along over the edge of Wheeler's cranberry meadow just below Fair Haven, which I at first thought a gull. But with my glass I found it appeared like a hawk, and had a perfectly white head and tail, and broad black or blackish wings. It sailed and circled along over the low cliff, and the crows dived at it in the field of my glass. I saw it well both above and beneath as it turned, and then it passed off to hover over the cliffs at a greater height. It was undoubtedly a white-headed eagle, though to the eye it was but a large hawk.

I find that I can criticise my composition best when I stand at a little distance from it, when I do not see it, for instance. I make a little chapter of contents, which enables me to recall it page by page to my mind, and judge it more impartially when my manuscript is out of the way. The distraction of surveying enables me rapidly to take new points of view. A day or two of surveying is equal to a journey.

Some poets mature early and die young. Their fruits have a delicious flavor like strawberries, but do not keep till fall or winter. Others are slower in coming to their growth. Their fruits may be less delicious, but are a more lasting food, and are so hardened by the

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sun of summer and the coolness of autumn that they keep sound over winter.

April 8, 1859. As I stood by the foot of a middling-sized white pine the other day, on Fair Haven Hill, one of the very windy days, I felt the ground rise and fall under my feet, being lifted by the roots of the pine, which was waving in the wind, so loosely are they planted.

What a pitiful business is the fur trade, which has been pursued now for so many ages, for so many years, by famous companies, which enjoy a profitable monopoly, and control a large part of the earth's surface. Unweariedly they pursue and ferret out small animals by the aid of all the loafing class, tempted by rum and money, that they may rob some little fellow-creature of its coat to adorn or thicken their own, that they may get a fashionable covering in which to hide their heads, or a suitable robe in which to dispense justice to their *fellow-men!* Regarded from the philosopher's point of view it is precisely on a level with rag and bone picking in the streets of cities. The Indian led a more respectable life before he was tempted to debase himself so much by the white man. Think how many musquash and weasel skins the Hudson's Bay Company pile up annually in their warehouses, leaving the bare red carcasses on the banks of the streams through-

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out all British America; and this it is chiefly which makes it *British* America. It is the place where Great Britain goes a-mousing. When we see men and boys spend their time shooting and trapping musquash and mink, we cannot but have a poorer opinion of them, unless we thought meanly of them before. Yet the world is imposed on by the fame of the Hudson Bay and Northwest Fur Companies, who are only so many partners, more or less, in the same sort of business, with thousands of just such loafing men and boys in their service to abet them. On the one side is the Hudson Bay Company, on the other the company of scavengers who clear the sewers of Paris of their vermin. There is a good excuse for smoking out or poisoning rats which infest the house, but when they are as far off as Hudson's Bay, I think that we had better let them alone. To such an extent do time and distance, and our imaginations, consecrate at last not only the most ordinary, but even the vilest pursuits. The efforts of legislation from time to time to stem the torrent are significant, as showing that there is some sense and conscience left, but they are insignificant in their effects. . . .

It will not do to be thoughtless with regard to any of our valuables or property. When you get to Europe you will meet the most ten-

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der-hearted and delicately bred lady, perhaps the President of the Anti-Slavery Society, or of that for the encouragement of humanity to animals, marching or presiding with the scales from a tortoise's back, obtained by laying live coals on it to make them curl up, stuck in her hair, rat-skins fitting as close to her fingers as erst to the rats; and her cloak, perchance, adorned with the spoils of a hundred skunks. Could she not wear other armor in the war of humanity?

Cold as it is, and has been for several weeks, in all exposed places, I find it unexpectedly warm in perfectly sheltered places where the sun shines, and so it always is in April. The cold wind from the northwest seems distinct and separable from the air here warmed by the sun, and when I sit in some warm and sheltered hollow in the woods, I feel the cold currents drop into it occasionally, just as they are seen to ripple a small lake in such a situation from time to time.

The epigæa is not quite out. The earliest peculiarly *woodland* herbaceous flowers are epigæa, anemone, thalictrum, and (by the first of May) *Viola pedata*. These grow quite in the woods amid dry leaves, nor do they depend so much on water as the very earliest flowers. I am perhaps more surprised by the growth of the

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Viola pedata leaves by the side of paths amid the shrub oaks, and half covered with oak leaves, than by any other growth, the situation is so dry and the surrounding bushes so apparently lifeless.

April 9, 1841. The brave man does not mind the call of the trumpet, nor hear the idle clashing of swords without, for the infinite din within. War is but a training compared with the active service of his peace. Is he not at war? Does he not resist the ocean swell within him, and walk as gently as the summer's sea? Would you have him parade in uniform and manœuvre men, whose equanimity is his uniform, and who is himself manœuvred?

April 9, 1853. P. M. To Second Division. The chipping sparrow, with its ashy white breast, white streak over eye, and undivided chestnut crown, holds up its head and pours forth its *che che che che che che*. . . . Saw a pine warbler, by ventriloquism sounding further off than it was, which was seven or eight feet, hopping and flitting from twig to twig, apparently picking the small flies at and about the base of the needles at the extremities of the twigs. . . . A warm and hazy, but breezy day. The sound of the laborers striking the iron nails of the railroad with their sledges is as in the sultry days of summer, — resounds, as it were,

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from the hazy sky as from a roof, a more confined, and in that sense more domestic, sound, echoing along between the earth and the low heavens. The same strokes would produce a very different sound in the winter. . . . Beyond the desert, hear the hooting owl, which, as formerly, I at first mistook for the hounding of a dog, a squealing sound followed by *hoo hoo hoo* deliberately, and particularly sonorous and ringing. This at 2 P. M. . . .

The cowslips are well out, the first conspicuous herbaceous flower, for that of the skunk-cabbage is concealed in its spathe.

April 9, 1855. 5¼ A. M. To red bridge just before sunrise. . . . Hear the hoarse, rasping *chuck* or chatter of crow blackbirds, and distinguish their long, broad tails. Wilson says that the only note of the rusty grackle is a *chuck*, though he is told that at Hudson's Bay at the breeding time they sing with a fine note. Here they utter not only a *chuck*, but a fine shrill whistle. They cover the top of a tree now, and their concert is of this character. They all seem laboring together to get out a clear strain, as it were wetting their whistles against their arrival at Hudson's Bay. They begin, as it were, by disgorging or spitting it out like so much tow, from a full throat, and conclude with a clear, fine, shrill, ear-piercing

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whistle. Then away they go, all chattering together.

April 9, 1858. . . . I doubt if men do ever simply and naturally glorify God in the ordinary sense, but it is remarkable how sincerely in all ages they glorify nature. The praising of Aurora, for instance, under some form in all ages is obedience to as irresistible an instinct as that which impels the frogs to peep.

April 9, 1859. P. M. . . . We go seeking the south sides of hills and woods, or deep hollows to walk in, this cold and blustering day. We sit by the side of little Goose Pond to watch the ripples on it. Now it is merely smooth, and then there drops down upon it, deep as it lies amid the hills, a sharp and narrow blast of the icy north wind careering above, striking it perhaps by a point or an edge, and swiftly spreading along it, making a dark blue ripple. Now four or five windy bolts, sharp or blunt, strike it at once and spread different ways. The boisterous but playful north wind evidently stoops from a considerable height to dally with this fair pool which it discerns beneath. You could sit there and watch these blue shadows playing over the surface like light and shade on changeable silk, for hours. It reminds me, too, of swift Camilla on a field of grain. The wind often touches the water only

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by the finest points or edges. It is thus when you look in some measure from the sun, but if you move round so as to come more nearly opposite to him, then these dark blue ripples are all sparkles too bright to look at, for now you see the sides of the wavelets which reflect the sun to you. . . . Watching the ripples fall and dart across the surface of low-lying and small woodland lakes is one of the amusements of these windy March and April days. It is only on small lakes deep sunk in hollows in the woods that you can see or study them these days, for the winds sweep over the whole breadth of larger lakes incessantly, but they only touch these sheltered lakelets by fine points and edges from time to time.

And then there is such a fiddling in the woods, such a viol-creaking of bough on bough, that you would think music was being born again, as in the days of Orpheus. Orpheus and Apollo are certainly there taking lessons; ay, and the jay and the blackbird, too, learn now where they stole their "thunder." They are, perforce, silent, meditating new strains.

When the playful breeze drops on the pool, it springs to right and left quick as a kitten playing with dead leaves, clapping her paw on them. . . . Those ripple lakes lie now in the midst of mostly bare brown or tawny dry

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wood-lands, themselves the most living objects. They may say to the first woodland flowers, We played with the north winds here before you were born.

April 10, 1841. How much virtue there is in simply seeing. We may almost say that the hero has striven in vain for his preëminency, if the student oversees him. The woman who sits in the house and *sees* is a match for a stirring captain. Those still, piercing eyes, as faithfully exercised as their talent, will keep her even with Alexander or Shakespeare. They may go to Asia with parade, or to fairyland, but not beyond her ray. We are as much as we see. Faith is sight and knowledge. The hands only serve the eyes. The farthest blue streak in the horizon I can see, I may reach before many sunsets. What I saw alters not. In my night when I wander, it is still steadfast as the star which the sailor steers by.

Whoever has had one thought quite lonely, and could contentedly digest that, knowing that none could accept it, may rise to the heights of humanity and overlook all living men as from a pinnacle. Speech never made man master of men, but the eloquently refraining from it.

April 10, 1853. . . . The saxifrage is beginning to be abundant, elevating its flowers somewhat, pure trustful white amid its pretty

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notched and reddish cup of leaves. The white saxifrage is a response from earth to the increased light of the year; the yellow crowfoot, to the increased heat of the sun. . . .

When the farmer cleans out his ditches, I mourn the loss of many a flower which he calls a weed. The main charm about the lower road, just beyond the bridge, to me has been in the little grove of locusts, sallows, birches, etc., which has sprung up on the bank as you rise the hill. Yesterday I saw a man who is building a house near by cutting them down. Finding he was going to cut them all, I said if I were in his place I would not have them cut for a hundred dollars. "Why," said he, "they are nothing but a parcel of prickly bushes and are not worth anything. I'm going to build a new wall here." And so to ornament the approach to his house he substituted a bare ugly wall for an interesting grove.

April 10, 1854. April rain. How sure a rain is to bring the tree-sparrows into the yard, to sing sweetly, canary-like.

I bought me a spyglass some weeks since. I buy but few things, and those not till long after I begin to want them, so that when I do get them I am prepared to make a perfect use of them and extract their whole sweetness.

April 11, 1841. A greater baldness my life

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seeks, as the crest of some bare hill, which towns and cities do not afford. I want a directer relation with the sun.

April 11, 1852. . . . The sight of Nut Meadow Brook in Brown's land reminds me that the attractiveness of a brook depends much on the character of its bottom. I love just now to see one flowing through soft sand like this, where it wears a deep but irregular channel, now wider and shallower with distinct ripple marks, now shelving off suddenly to indistinct depths, meandering as well up and down as from side to side, deepest where narrowest, and ever gullying under this bank or that, its bottom lifted up to one side or the other, the current inclining to one side. I stop to look at the circular shadows of the dimples, over the yellow sand, and the dark brown clams on their edges in the sand at the bottom. (I hear the sound of the piano below as I write this, and feel as if the winter in me were at length beginning to thaw, for my spring has been even more backward than nature's. For a month past life has been a thing incredible to me. None but the kind gods can make me sane. If only they will let their south winds blow on me. I ask to be melted. You can only ask of the metals that they be tender to the fire that melts them. To naught else can they be tender.)

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The sweet flags are now starting up under water two inches high, and minnows dart.

A pure brook is a very beautiful object to study minutely. It will bear the closest inspection, even to the fine air-bubbles, like minute globules of quicksilver, that lie on its bottom. The minute particles or spangles of golden mica in these sands, when the sun shines on them, remind one of the golden sands we read of. Everything is washed clean and bright, and the water is the best glass through which to see it. . . .

If I am too cold for human friendship, I trust I shall not soon be too cold for natural influences. It appears to be a law that you cannot have a deep sympathy with both man and nature. Those qualities which bring you near to the one estrange you from the other. . . .

Every man will be a poet if he can, otherwise a philosopher or man of science. This proves the superiority of the poet.

It is hard for a man to take money from his friends for any service. This suggests how all men should be related.

Ah! when a man has traveled, and robbed the horizon of his native fields of its mystery and poetry, its indefinite promise, tarnished the blue of distant mountains with his feet, when he has done this, he may begin to think

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of another world. What is this longer to him? . . .

At what an expense any valuable work is performed! — at the expense of a life! If you do one thing well, what else are you good for meanwhile?

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